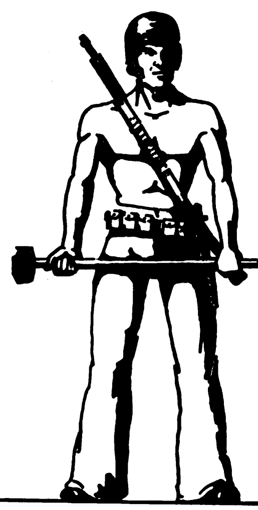

45th
BATTALION
SEA-BEES
UNITED STATES
NAVY


WRANGEL I.
SIBERIA
ANADYR
UELLON
BERING STRAIT
DIOMEDE IS.
NOME
ST. LAWRENCE I.
NORTON SOUND
YUKON
SOVIET UNION
UNITED STATES
INTERNATIONAL DATE LINE
MONDAY
SUNDAY
HALL I.
ST. MATTHEW I.
NUNIVAK I.
BERING SEA
PLATINUM
ATTU I.
NEAR IS.
AGATTU I.
PRIBILOF IS.
BRISTOL BAY
KISKA I.
RAT IS.
AMCHITKA I.
TANAGA I.
KANAGA I.
ADAK I.
DUTCH HARBOR
UNIMAK I.
ATKA I.
ANDREANOF IS.
AMLIA I.
UMNAK I.
UNALASKA I.
SHUMAGIN I.
FOX IS.
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS


TIC OCEAN
PT. BARROW
COLVILLE R.
RIVER
FAIRBANKS
TANANA
RIVER
ASKA
ANCHORAGE
SEWARD
COOK INLET
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND
AFOGNAK I.
KODIAK
KODIAK I.
GULF
OF
ALASKA
OCEAN
CANADA
MACKENZIE
RIVER
WHITEHORSE
SKAGWAY
JUNEAU
SITKA
QUEEN CHARLOTTE IS.
VANCOUVER I.
SEATTLE



# CHECHAKHO TO SOURDOUGH

# A WORD ABOUT THE TITLE

As everybody who has been to Alaska knows, *chechakho* (sometimes spelled *cheechakko*) is Alaska's name for the newcomer, the greenhorn, the tenderfoot. The *sourdough,* of course, is the grizzled veteran of the North, the old-timer, the man who by experience has become wise to the ways of the North Country.

# CHECHAKHO
## TO
# SOURDOUGH

*the story of the*

**FORTY-FIFTH**

**UNITED STATES NAVAL**

**CONSTRUCTION**

**BATTALION**

*in*

**ALASKA**

★

**WORLD WAR II**

# IN MEMORIAM

THIS PAGE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE MEMBERS OF THE 45TH UNITED STATES NAVAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES WHILE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.

☆

HENRY FROESCH
CARPENTER'S MATE FIRST CLASS
BOONE, IOWA

☆

VERNON ROTH
METALSMITH FIRST CLASS
DRAKE, NORTH DAKOTA

☆

HAROLD WALTERS
FIREMAN SECOND CLASS
DES MOINES, IOWA

# FOREWORD

Shortly after war was declared the call went out for construction workers of all types to serve their country to the best of their abilities as members of the United States Naval Construction Battalions. From these thousands of early volunteers for the "Seabees" the "Forty-fifth" was formed. Now, approximately eighteen months after its activation, the record can be consulted.

In the ensuing pages is graphic proof of hundreds of construction projects, large and small, accomplished with consummate skill, courage and fortitude under weather conditions generally conceded to be the "world's worst." At various times heroic efforts and deeds far above and beyond the normal call of duty were attempted and successfully completed.

Now, at the end of the first tour of duty, the Officer in Charge wishes to say to the members of the 45th United States Naval Construction Battalion—"Well done!"

To each and every man of the battalion this pictorial transcript of a never-ending struggle against the land, sea and all the fury of the Alaskan elements is unqualifiedly and sincerely dedicated.

J. P. Roulett,
*Commander, USNR*

The Aleutian Islands,
May, 1944



COMMANDER J. P. ROULETT

# Our Skipper...

A New Yorker by birth . . . and by choice since then . . . holds degree in civil engineering . . . seventeen years in heavy construction—building dams, tunnels, airfields, piers and subways . . . called to active duty in March of 1941 in public works department of Third Naval District . . . became assistant to OinC of large scale construction and procurement contract for NAS, Quonset, R. I., and overseas bases . . . executive officer, ABD, Davisville, R. I., March, 1942, to February, 1943 . . . OinC, Alaskan ABD, Dutch Harbor . . . was one of four officers who coined word "Seabee" and originated the now-famous insigne . . . skipper of the 45th since early summer, '43.



LIEUTENANT COMMANDER J. W. JONES

# Our Exec...

Born in Mintaro, South Australia . . . but likes New York and lives there when he can . . . served in Army during World War I . . . was graduated from Villanova with electrical engineering degree in 1920 . . . specialized in power and sewage disposal plants before receiving commission in Navy . . . left firm of consulting engineers in New York eight years after graduation to serve on Board of Transportation for New York City . . . did subway substation engineering for private contracting firm . . . then went back to municipal work, supervising electrical engineering for New York's public works department . . . came to 45th on transfer from another battalion.



COMMANDER C. G. SMALLWOOD

# Our First Skipper...

Served through first World War with the Army Engineers . . . completing various courses at Army Engineers' schools during his service . . . continued study of engineering at two additional specialized schools . . . concentrated on design and supervision of building construction . . . qualified, in addition, in sewage and disposal plant construction, the building of water systems and highway engineering . . . left the 45th in the spring of '43 to assume duties of regimental commander at our first base . . . returned to States when regiment was dissolved . . . now is executive officer at receiving barracks, N. C. T. C., Davisville, R. I.

# CONTENTS

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EDITED IN THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AND PRINTED IN SAN FRANCISCO

# A Word of Appreciation

The staff wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all those persons in the battalion and outside of it who helped to make this book possible. To list everyone who by his interest and cooperation has given moral and actual aid would be to duplicate the battalion roster.

We wish especially to offer our thanks to A. A. Robichaud, PhoM1c, of the First Construction Brigade, and Alton E. Wheeler, CPhoM, of the Sixth Construction Regiment, for their generous loan of facilities and labor; to the company clerks and yeomen for compiling the list of battalion personnel and home addresses; and to each individual who loaned prints or negatives for use within these covers.

Deserving of special mention also is the GI coffee which kept the staff awake those last long nights when the final preparation of layouts and copy was accomplished.

# NORTHLAND SAGA

In this, the main section of our book, we tell the story of what happened to us and our battalion from that chill day in November, 1942, when we first saw the strange lights and high wire fence of "boot" camp until that day in May, 1944, when after 16 months overseas in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands we clambered aboard a troopship bound back to civilization and home.



# IN THE BEGINNING



We Look Over Camp Allen



"You'll Be Sorry!"



The "Physical"

FORGETTING THE HIGH WIRE FENCE with its guarded gates, it looked to us at first like any college campus in Virginia. Anything began to look good after a long, tiring train trip and the fresh memory of missed sleep and meals, dirt and dust, and the anxiety of breaking into a new and unbending routine.

But it wasn't a southern campus by any stretch of the imagination. And such a cheery greeting we received from nearly-scalped "boots" who had arrived at Camp Allen only a few days ahead of us! "You'll be sorry! You'll be sorry!" they chanted to us as we awaited admittance to their exclusive society.

We found out what they meant as the gates swung shut on us and our civilian life.

Not one of us ever since has been able to give an accurate estimate of the number of doctors turned loose to prod, thump, measure and jab our bare frames as we ran the gauntlet with red numbers painted on our chests.

Our own clothes were gone and we moved from the mass-production examination line, nicked and naked, smack into Navy togs at the other end. Nothing could be done to us now that we couldn't endure; we felt that the worst was over.

This was before they led us to the barber shop or, less kindly defined, the shearing pens. Two barbers operated on a single victim, one on each side, with utter disregard for the fact that the tall barbers could reach higher than their shorter partners. One side of our heads might be clipped an inch or so higher than the other. It didn't matter; we weren't going anywhere.

That is, we weren't going anywhere except to visit the doctors again. By now they were armed with hypodermic needles—the world's finest collection; some were even said to be square, while others had a spiral tip that had to be screwed in. We don't know for sure. We couldn't bring ourselves to look at them.

No matter what the day might bring, two things we were sure of—there would be drilling and eating. The first had better be left unmentioned at this stage. As for eating, it had drawbacks, too. There were the little jobs of helping prepare the meals and cleaning up afterward.

But we got through it all and ended up looking and acting like the Navy expected us to. Or we tried to, at least.



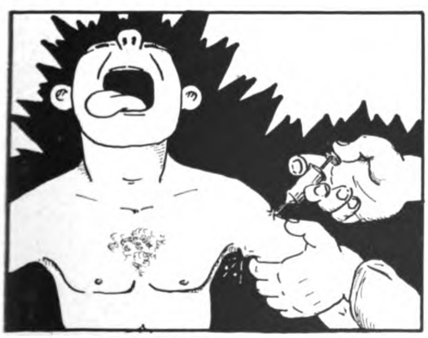
There She Goes!



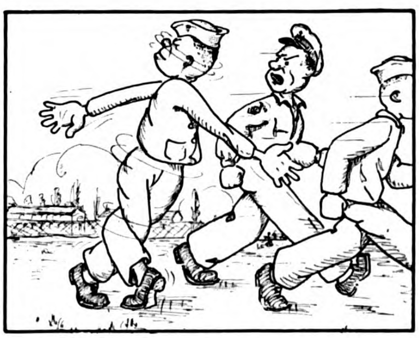
"Bubble Dancer"



Finished Product



The Square Needle



"Rip, MARCH!"



IMMEDIATELY AFTER our commissioning we raised the colors at our battalion headquarters and dedicated the flag pole. It was our first act as a battalion.



OUR COLOR GUARD, flags whipped out almost straight by the cold wind, demonstrated the military precision which marked the end of our intensive basic training.

# A BATTALION IS BORN

OUR BASIC TRAINING had knocked the rough edges off and given us a bit of polish but, officially, we were still "boots" and not a commissioned battalion.

The great day of our "graduation" came shortly after we had moved to Camp Peary for advanced training, much of it under the soft-spoken and gentle Marines. Peary was still in the growing stage, so we arrived in time to be the first construction battalion commissioned there.

We received our colors on the new drill field during a dress parade and review held on what we still think of as "the coldest day in our lives." Even winter-hardened Northerners feared their feet would freeze before it came time to step out behind the band and pass before the reviewing stand.

When the ceremonies were over, we had our own colors, we were commissioned as the 45th United States Naval Construction Battalion, and we had won the privilege of shedding our khaki leggings.

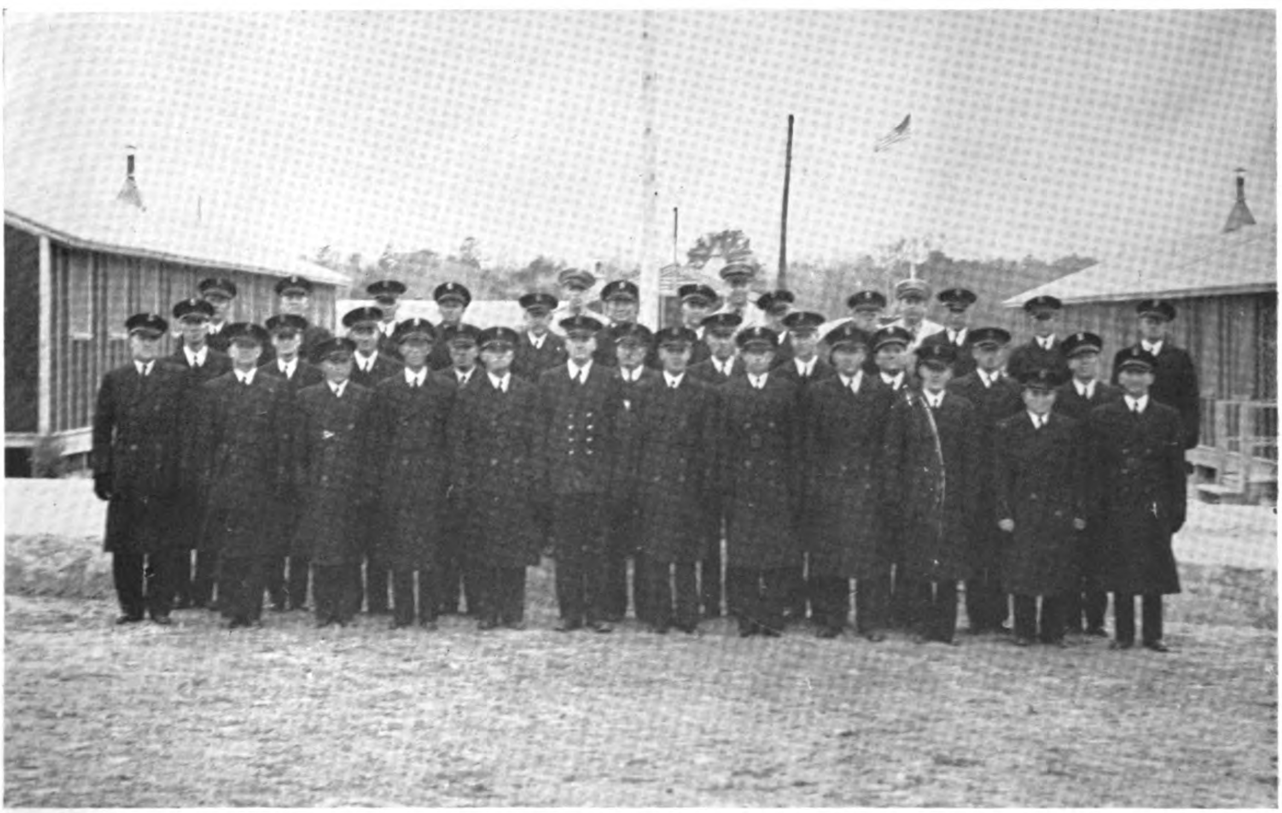
We were no longer "boots" but instead, Seabees.



BEHIND THE BAND, Headquarters company (left) prepares to leave the massed formation for a swing around the drill field and the reviewing officers. Companies "A," "B," "C," and "D" stand at attention awaiting the command that will send them, at spaced intervals, into the same maneuver.



OUR ORIGINAL ROSTER OF OFFICERS, selected mainly from the engineering and construction worlds, were the ones to whom was entrusted the responsibility of guiding the destinies of our battalion in its overseas tour of duty. Not all were present for this photo



IF WE DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, we found out later that the men who would always be on hand to run us through our paces were the CPO's, the chief petty officers. We began our battalion with this group, but it wasn't long before promotions from the lower ratings swelled their number.

# WE GO WEST

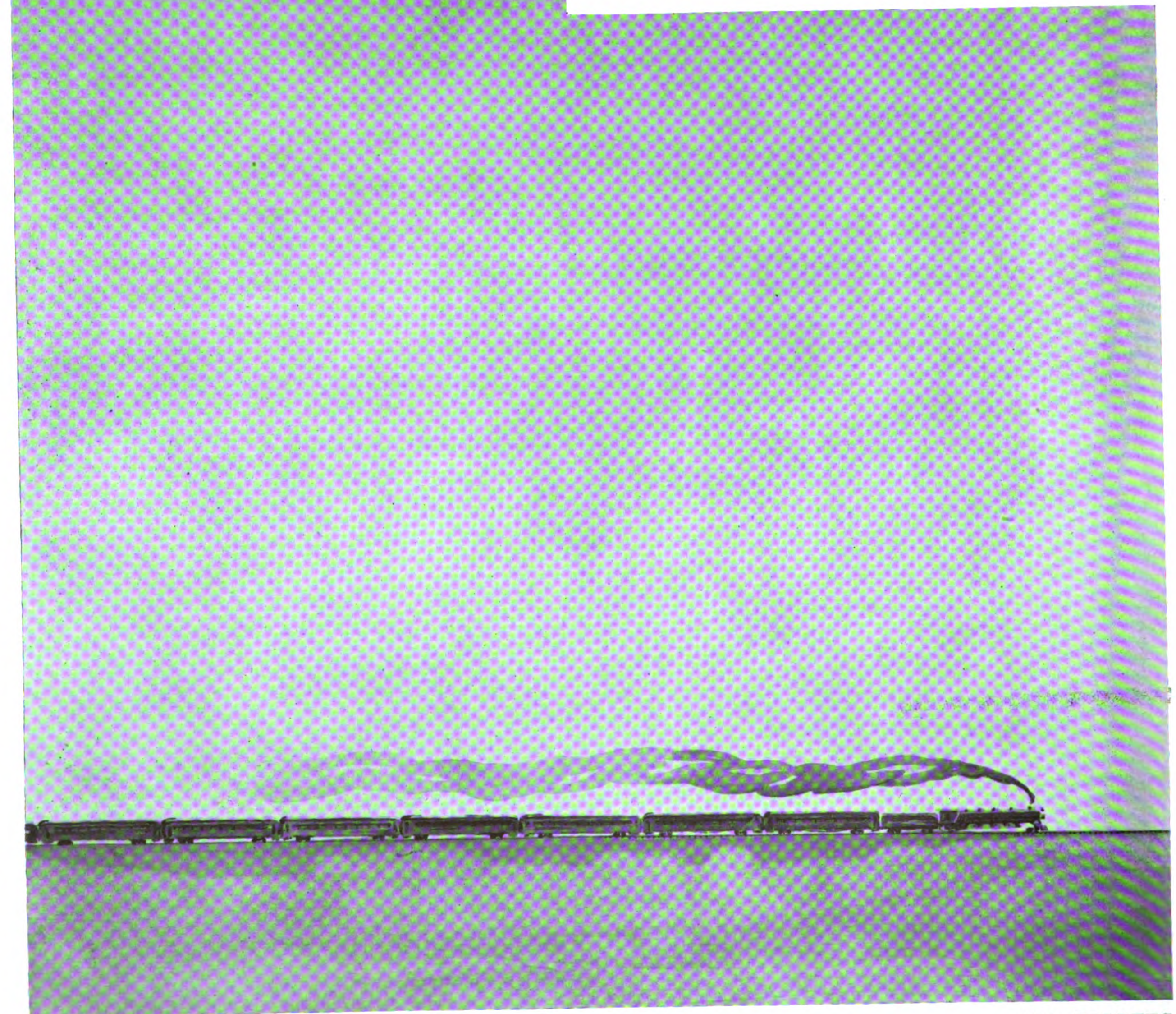
When we took off our leggings we also discarded our "boot" restrictions. Now we were entitled to "liberty"—a chance to get out of camp for a while and see how much the civilian world had changed during our incarceration. We discovered the civilian world was filled mainly with guys in uniform like us.

At this time, too, the pre-embarkation leave we had talked so much about began to have the reality of dates on a calendar. Ten per cent of us took "early leave," and went by train and plane to spend a few fleeting hours at home. The rest of us made plans.

Our plans were shattered with a jolting suddenness. Leaves were cancelled. Instead of going home, we were herded aboard troop trains and we left the miserable mud of Camp Peary behind.

Three trains started off in three different directions, but hardly had the Peary mud dried on our shoes when we sensed that we were headed west.

After a week-long trek across the United States, through prairies and over mountains, we climbed off in the sunshine of California at Camp Rousseau.



# —AND NORTH

Our stay at Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, was short for most of us. We promptly did an about face. After a week on a train going west, we brushed the grime off our clothes and got on a train again, heading east—going home at last on that postponed leave.

Some of us who lived in the east spent our leave in California, rather than make another round trip across the country. We basked in the light of movie stars in glamorous Hollywood, enjoying to the full the last civilization we might see for a long while.

After days which flew past faster than time ever did before, we returned to camp—a camp all aflutter with excitement. Our quonset warehouses were stocked with sheepskin-lined coats, long-handled underwear, green rain suits and a strange garment like a ski suit. It looked as though we were going north.

We did. After another train ride and a long march through endless waterfront warehouses, we struggled up a slippery gangplank, loaded down with all our gear. Without fanfare, we silently shoved off, our ship's prow headed toward the Northern Lights.





# CHECHAKHOS IN "THE GREAT LAND"

OUR INTRODUCTION TO ALASKA was stormy—and typical. As we plowed northward through the sea, the wind grew sharper and colder. We stayed most of the time down in the dingy hold, foul though the air was, rather than brave the stinging of the howling wind.

Then one afternoon one of the more hardy among us, who had been topside, came clambering down the ladder, and shouted: "Hey! There's land up there! I can see a mountain top!" One of the less seaworthy among us lifted a sea-green face to mutter, "Land ho!"

Soon a steady stream of us climbed the ladder and went topside "to see." A few minutes later the steady stream reversed itself. We went below again, to dig into our pack of foul weather clothing. Wind, rain, sleet and snow had hit us on the deck—all at the same time. We bundled up and tried it again. This time the sun was dimly shining.

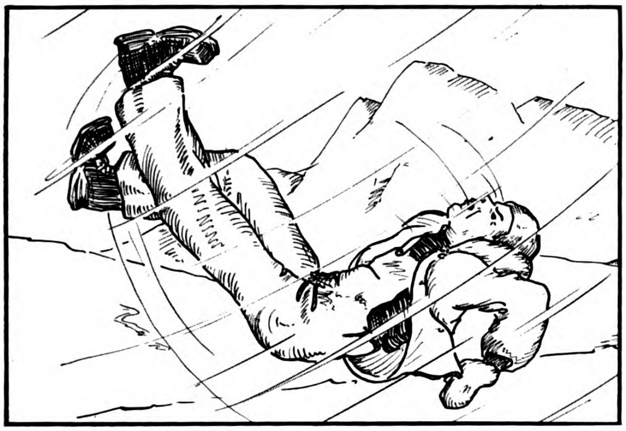
We learned early the veracity of the time-worn remark: "If you don't like the weather, wait a minute."

We lined the rail as that first mountain peak grew larger, and gradually the white land around it was revealed to our wondering eyes.

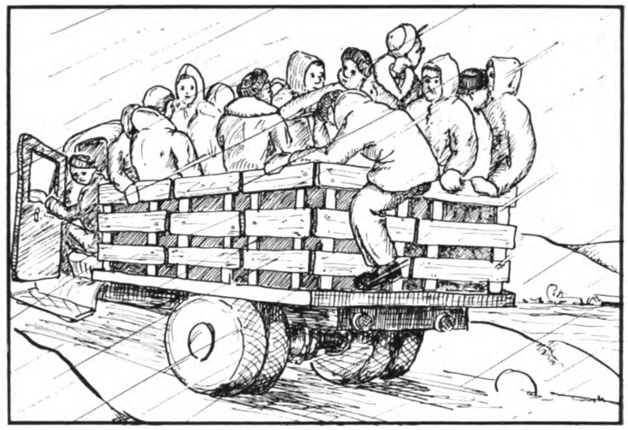
A small snow-covered island slid by us, then another, and another. Soon we found our ship swallowed in a great bay, almost surrounded by white land. A little village seemed to cling to the shore. We tied up at the dock. We lay there overnight, wondering about this new country—anxious to get ashore, and yet a little awestruck at its strangeness.

In the dim light of the next morning we saw a long line of trucks creep along a road which seemed to be carved right in a mountainside. Soon we had slid down the gangplank and were aboard those trucks. With sleet and snow biting into our faces, we were carried to our new homes on icy, snowy roads.

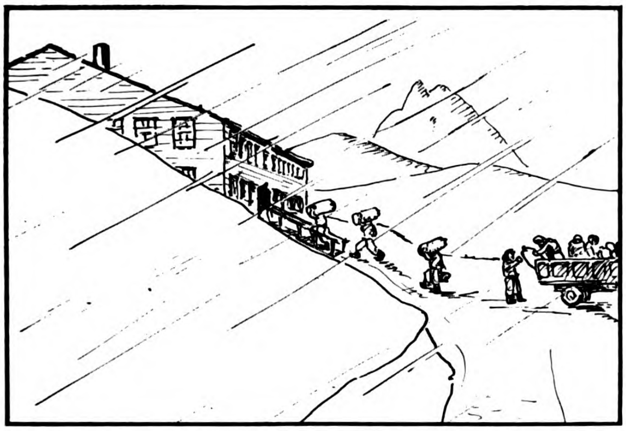
For some of us that meant a hulking, unfinished barracks; for others of us, cold and empty shacks on the bank of a frozen stream. For all of us it meant a home surrounded by a vastness of snow and ice and cold. "Alaska," in a native tongue, means "The Great Land." And we knew we were chechakhos indeed.



We met ice intimately when we landed on Alaskan shores. We felt the impact of a hard and rugged country, chechakhos that we were.



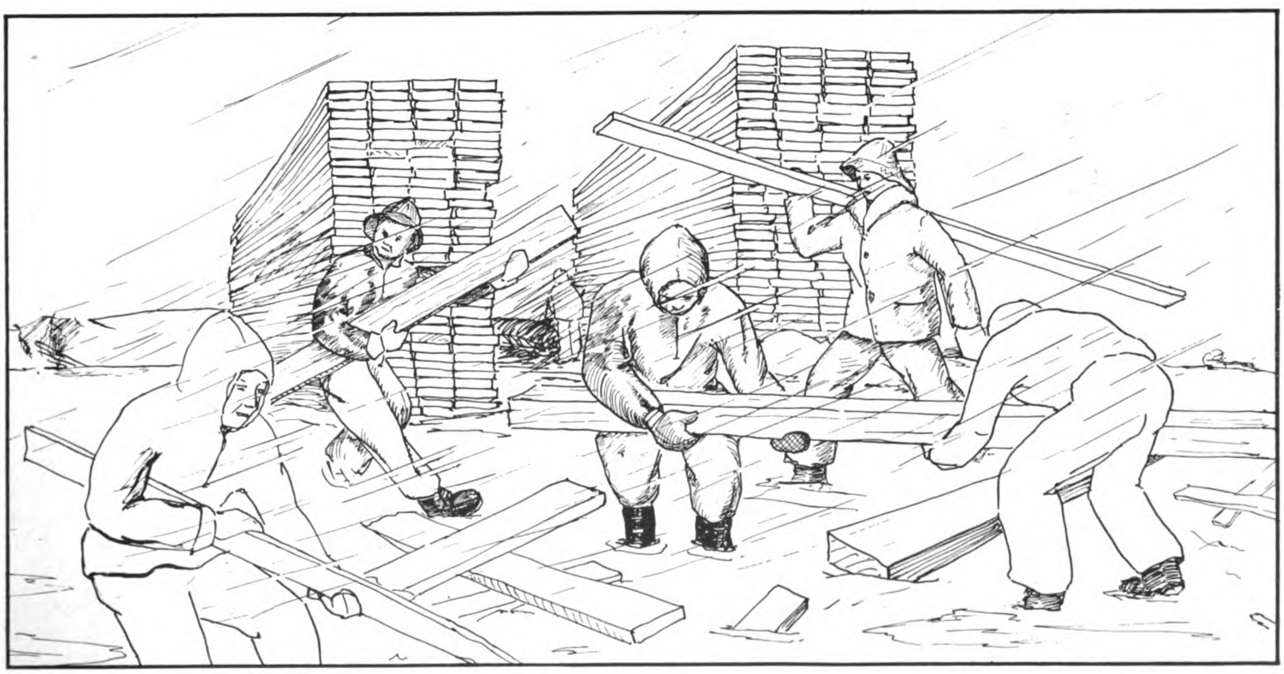
Our first ride in the Northland was not on dogsleds, but on trucks which skidded on icy roads as we were taken from the dock to our new homes.



High on an icy hill, an unfinished barracks was the first Alaska home for some of us. We arrived in a driving sleet-and-snow storm.



The williwaw, we discovered early, was a Northland wind which always blew from the direction in which we were trying to go.



The country was strange, but the first job for a good many of us was familiar—stacking lumber in a driving rain. We stood in snow instead of mud, but the work almost made us homesick for Camp Peary! Those first days we wondered if we had come so far just to continue this.




# BASE BUILDERS

Roughly, the way to build a base would be to start from scratch with miles of hills and volcanic rock for a plot and use plans designed for a good-sized, average American town; this would include waterworks, light and power plants, roads and communications, administration and recreation centers, housing for countless men, places to feed them and, of course, "industrial centers."

But this would still give us only a peace-time city; in times of war, our "city" must be expanded to include every need of the military. To arrive at what that need must be, you can but guess and then multiply your guess by ten, twenty or fifty. Maybe more.

Such was the work cut out for us. We were to help build a military base.

The honor of receiving the first work assignment went to the stevedore gang so that our flow of supplies, materials, food, mail and equipment kept coming along in an endless wave from ship to warehouse.

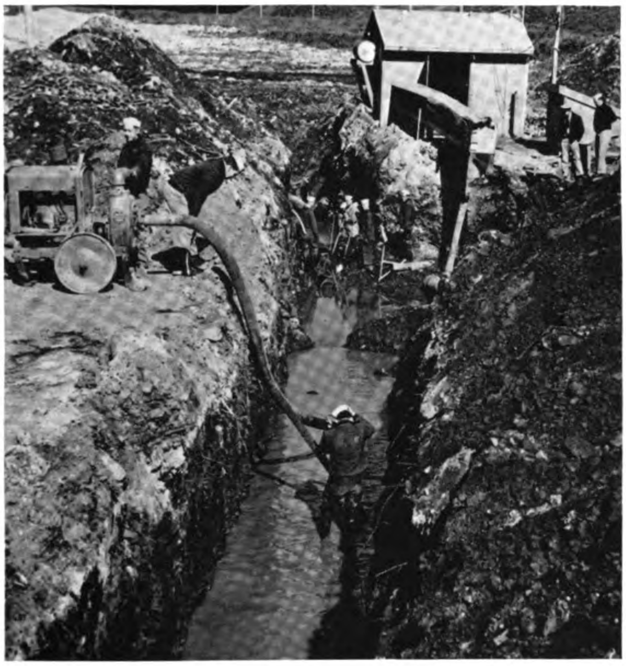
Early days were wet and cold days, the tail end of what sourdoughs told us was "the meanest winter in years." With some of the kinks and wrinkles straightened out, a nine-hour work day set the pace.

Then it went to ten hours; we left our beds at the Russian River camp at 4:30 in the morning so that we could be hauled by trucks to a breakfast table miles away. Residents in "The Flats," lucky boys, didn't have so far to go; they could sleep until 5:00. It was dark when we were aroused by reveille but then it was still dark at 9:00 o'clock anyway. It was dark most of the day.

Gradually the hours of daylight increased, the weather moderated. Each man began to find himself working at his particular trade or one closely allied to it. We moved in nearer our work; the less time spent in traveling, the more sleep we could get. Reveille was boosted up to a later hour.

There was no lack of work. We jumped from one job to another as quickly as we could finish them. Week by week we could see little but integral jobs being fitted together to make our base more complete.

Somehow every move we made counted toward building and maintaining our first base.



Persistent rains, as well as surface drainage, sometimes kept our ditches filled with water. It couldn't be stopped, so we pumped it out instead.



Sections of pipe were fitted tightly by forcing a tapered end into the section directly behind it. A four-man battering ram furnished push needed.

# IT'S A PIPE

True enough, it was a pipe line, this job. But it distinctly was not a "pipe" of a job. We found the going a bit rocky most of the way.

We were surrounded by water and it rained most of the time, but that still didn't give us enough water in the right places. To guide this flowing necessity to locations where it was needed, we dug a long ditch and laid length after length of pipe in it.

No matter how much mechanical equipment we had, there always was plenty of room for a man with a muscle-operated shovel or a jarring jack-hammer. Shovelful after shovelful did the trick. Then we laid down the sections of wire-bound, wood-stave pipe, fitted them tightly and covered the ditch.

The line was not only important for drinking, washing and other everyday uses of water but it added greatly to our security from another potential enemy, fire.



Solid rock meant so much work with explosives and jack-hammers that the resulting ditch for a two-way parallel line assumed the proportions of a canal in some spots. Here the men are ready to join two sections of pipe by pounding the last laid pipe into place with a piece of timber.



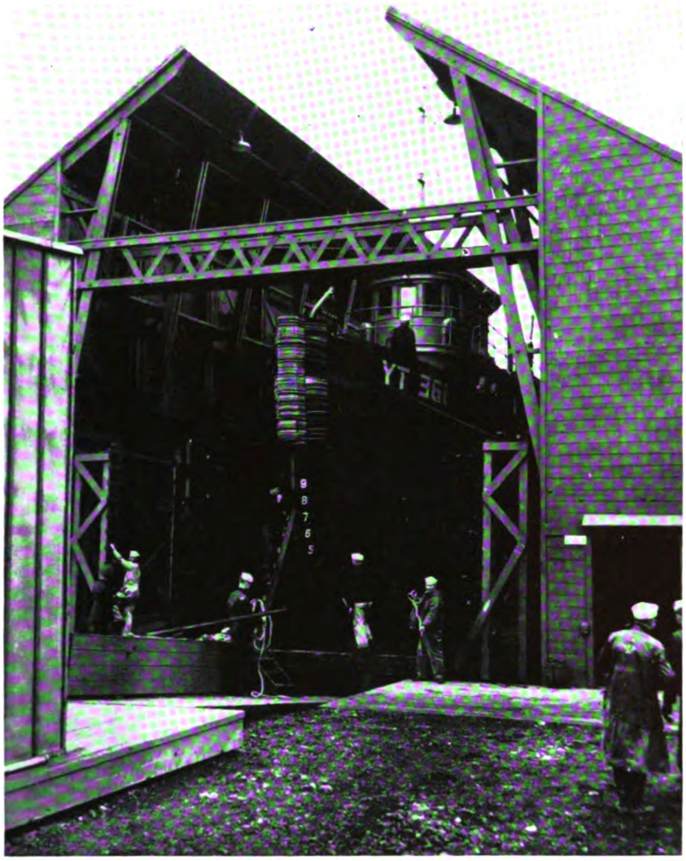
SOME OF THE LUMBER and timber used in our construction work was cut near our base from trees felled in the neighborhood. Usually there was water enough around us to make transportation of the logs an easy problem.



OLD DOCKS were constantly being repaired and new landings constructed. It was a busy waterfront and it kept us busy, too.



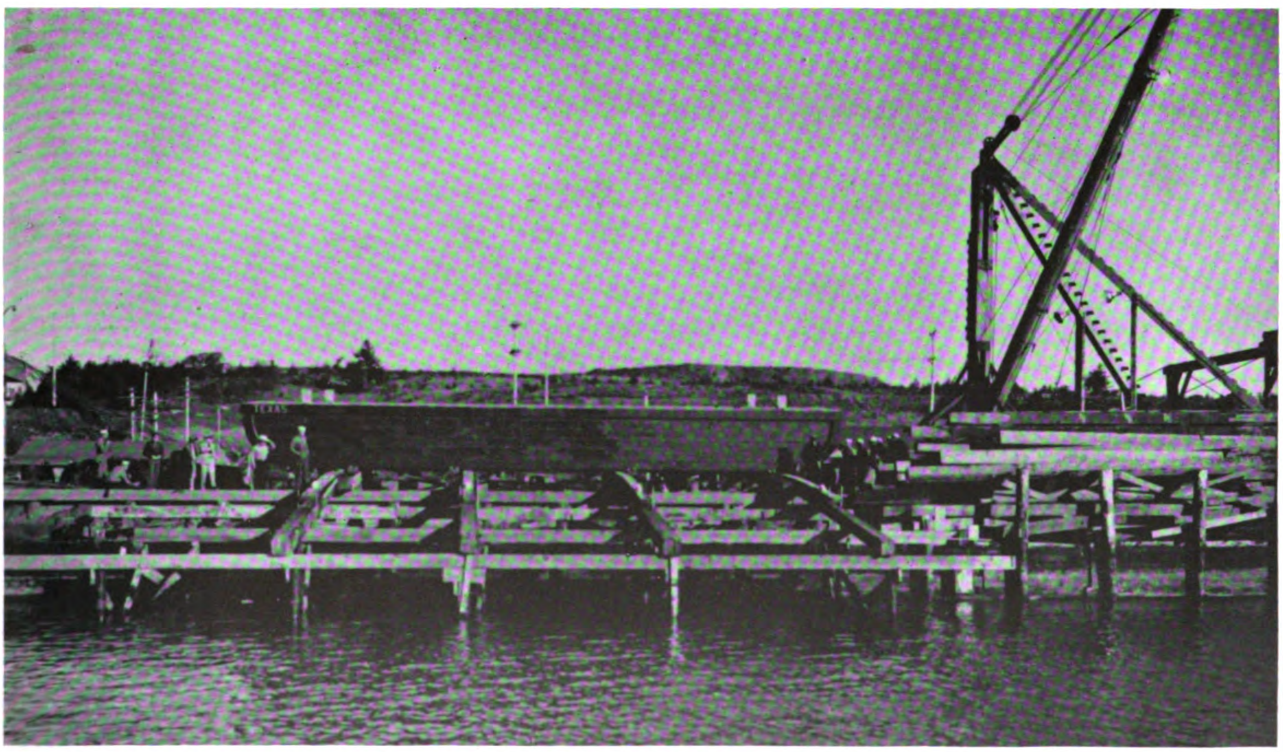
WARM, SUNNY DAYS were a rarity. When they did occur, we took advantage of them and did all we could, for we knew it wouldn't last long. Along the waterfront there was little to stop the wind and, if the rain wasn't enough to soak us, high rolling waves did the job




FOR COMPLETE INSPECTION and repair, nothing could quite beat the "marine railway" we built for this purpose. It could be used for all sorts of harbor craft and some of the smaller sea-going vessels.



PERCHED HIGH ABOVE the water, we made frequent inspections and greasings of our pile-driver rig, keeping it ready for any job that might pop up without warning.



WE GREASED THE WAYS and prepared to launch the "Texas," first of a line of wooden barges that honored the Lone Star state. A few minutes later she was afloat and being towed across the bay. We began then on the construction of the "Houston," a sister barge.

# BATTALION ON REVIEW

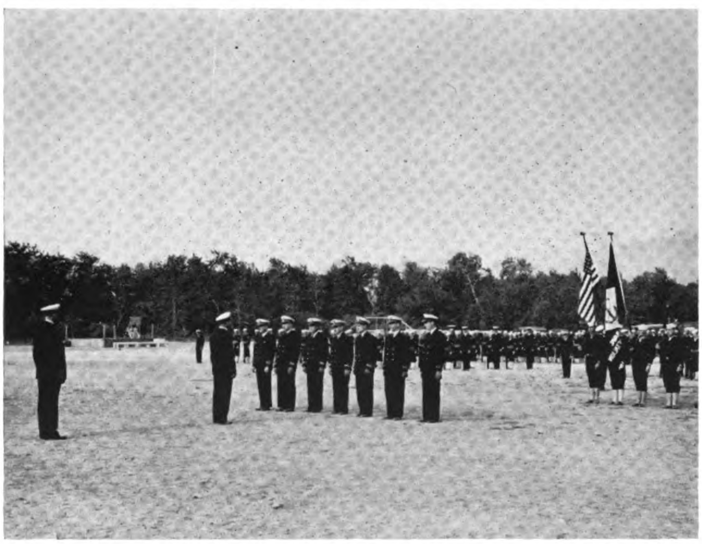
MIDSUMMER FOUND US polishing and pressing in preparation for an inspection and review. By now we had a drill field and athletic area; most of us were well acquainted with the fact that it once had been the lumber yard where we picked up and stacked millions of board feet of lumber the first few weeks after we arrived at our base.

Then, one Sunday morning, we passed in review before the Regimental Officer in Charge. It all went off smoothly; we stepped smartly across the drill field in a tempo set by a military band.

It was hard to believe that clouds of choking dust, raised by hundreds of marching feet, were rising from a spot that had originally been introduced to us as a mucky sea of ice, snow and water.




THE COLOR GUARD receives a salute from the officers in the reviewing stand. Behind them rise the rolling hills that hemmed us in on all sides.



OFFICERS AND MEN of the entire battalion stand rigidly at attention for a moment before the formation passes in review. Officers in center are staff officers.



AT "PRESENT ARMS," these lines of trained men testify to the effectiveness of our program of concentrated military training.





"Eyes Right" is the command given as we start past reviewing officers.



Headquarters Company men present their rifles, bolts open, for inspection.



Reviewing Officer begins the inspection of "A" Company, in formation.



"B" Company men, after marching around the field, step into place.



First Platoon "C" Company stands inspection while Second Platoon waits.



"D" Company officers and chiefs give hand salute, men "Present Arms."



# ALERT

JUST IN CASE . . . we kept on our toes. There was no telling when the sirens would be sounded, so we kept in training for that day.

Usually an "alert" alarm hit us in the night; it could happen during the day or even, as it did once, while we were stowing away our evening chow. We dashed for our arms and then dispersed to stations already assigned us.

We were workers, primarily, but we had to know how to defend our work.





IF OUR BATTLE STATION was on a hill, we scurried and scrambled to it in a few moments' time. Even at night we found our places during a complete blackout with no flashlights



THE WRONG WAY could mean death in a hurry. We were shown how a few inches of concealing foliage, when we were properly dispersed, screened us from a potential enemy. We posed this way to show what a fine target we made when bunched up with our heads above the weeds.

# TIME OUT FOR FUN

To break the speed and steadiness of our work we had to stop and play a little once in a while. Every man got a chance to turn to whatever sport, hobby or diversion he liked best when he had time for it.

Movies provided the lion's share of the recreational periods. For those who worked a night shift there were matinees. There was ample variety for the flicker addicts; more than one theater was operated and evenings we had our own movies in our mess halls and recreation centers.

Weekends we even got to see a stage show occasionally, either home-produced or the USO variety if a troupe happened to be near.

Our boxing team topped—or toppled, rather—all the competition in sight. In the science of trading wallops, the Marines, the Army, Navy and other Seabee battalions soon began to give us a wide berth. The 45th reputation on the baseball diamond was just as startling. We bowed to no one in athletics.

We were located in a fisherman's paradise for those whose recreational wishes ran toward the piscatorial. Salmon and trout fishing whiled away many an idle hour. Some went to the trouble to build and tend smoke-houses; it was no uncommon sight to see a Bee munching smoked salmon at any hour of the day—or night.

To practice the social amenities, lest we forget, we danced to our own dance band and nibbled sandwiches and drank cokes. It didn't happen very often and partners were scarce, but we *did* dance. And we enjoyed it.

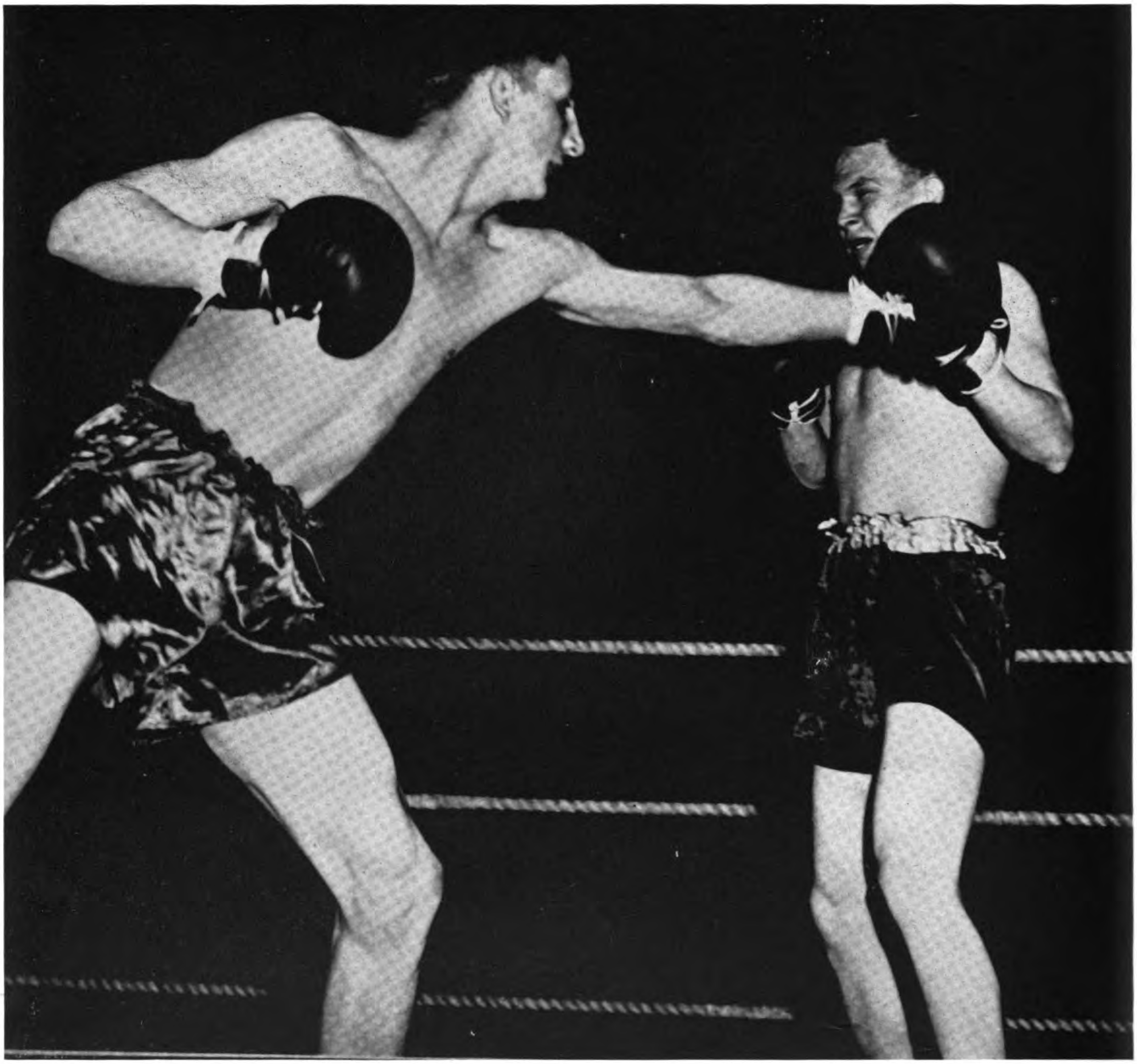
Then there was "liberty" in the big town, making it possible to spend a few hours—along with hard-earned dollars—in fun and freedom; or, at least, a reasonable facsimile thereof.

The whole thing was a great change from what we had known as civilians. Maybe we weren't entirely satisfied and griped a lot. Little did we realize that, some months and a couple of moves later, our fun would be cut down to a point where we could look back on our days at our first base as being "palmy days."

# King Bees of the Diamond



At the end of a season's league play our baseball team had a record string of victories and not a single defeat, although our opposition boasted some of the best ball-playing talent in the service. We never missed a chance to see our team play during the long twilight hours.



# SLUGGERS WITH A WALLOP

THE FIRST WE KNEW of the boxers in our midst came one day while practically the whole battalion was stacking lumber in a cold, driving rain. Word went out that a team of sluggers was being organized; the job we were doing then was enough to get anyone into a fighting mood. There were a good many volunteers.

Nearly two months of a rigid military life in "boot" camp had taken the rough edges off our frames, so it wasn't too hard to get into training.

The easiest job fell to the match-maker. Tangling with a bunch of untried Bees looked like an easy way to spend an evening. All the other teams on the base clamored for a chance to punch our noses, one at a time or the whole gang at once.

We fought them all and down they went; KO's, TKO's, decisions, draws. And very few of the latter.

Because we had agreed beforehand to return matches, we fought again with almost as much success. Then the match-maker really did go to work. No team cared to try it again. He begged, he dared and he pleaded. Our opposition was "too busy," or booked "too far ahead," or they just remained silent. True, they managed to slip one past our guard once in a while but our defeats were so infrequent and our victories so well known that it appeared we had almost hammered our way out of the fight game.

Did our sluggers have a following? In order to arrive at the scene of the evening's fisticuffs in time for a good seat, the whole battalion ate chow a little earlier than usual. Every man that was not indispensably engaged turned out to shout himself hoarse. It was a toss-up to see whether the fighters or their fans had the most spirit.



WHO'S HURTING WHO? Moments like this kept everybody jumping throughout the evening cards. It was the kind of action and entertainment that we all liked. We proved it by packing the building to overflowing every time our sluggers stepped into the ring to tear up the opposition.




THIS IS THE GANG of terrors that mopped up everything in sight on the base and even floored hand-picked topflight fighters from other bases in the sector. A few had previous experience in a limited way; some had never tried on a pair of gloves before they came into the 45th.



LITTLE REST was allowed the hard-working "Forty-fivers." Everybody wanted to dance and keep dancing. It was an opportunity that showed up too seldom to miss.



THEY AREN'T BASHFUL. It's just a hasty conference between a part of our dance committee and the Red Cross; probably wondering if it was time to break out the refreshments.

# The Light Fantastic

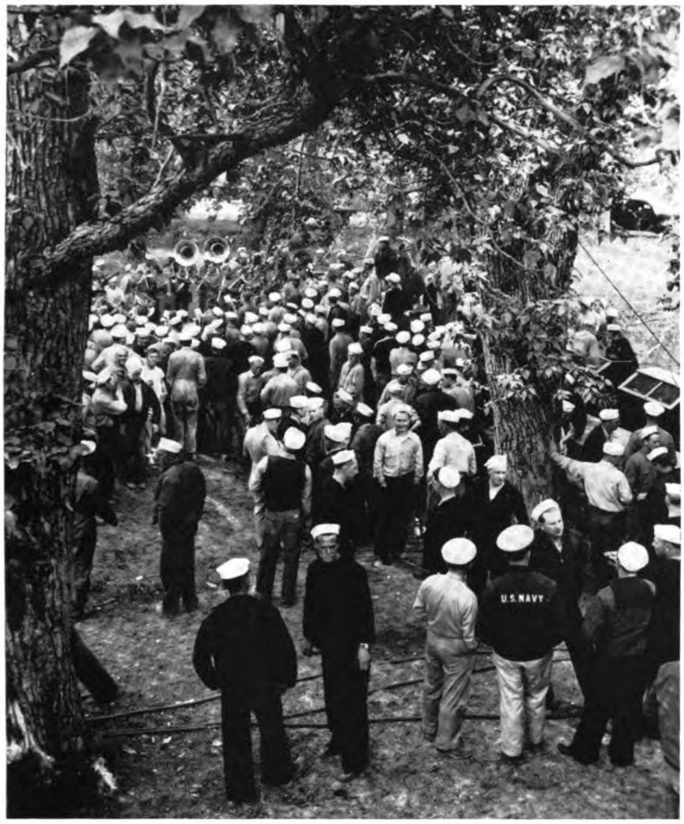
DRESS-UP DIVERSIONS didn't happen very often. But one occasion that called for the best and finest was our "moonlight supper dance." We had help from the Red Cross in putting the affair over in grand style.

Our own orchestra, "The Forty-fivers," gave out with music, sweet and hot, and set the mood with their theme of "Moonlight Becomes You."

There were refreshments, too, to occupy the predominating males in Navy togs while they waited for their turn to glide off with a partner from our gal friends of the nearby village.



FROM THE FEMININE ANGLE the affair was a success and a busy evening. The Bees greatly outnumbered their partners, never leaving a dull interlude when the dance floor was seen to be vacant. "Cutting" assured distribution of partners.



With few places to go, a field day and battalion picnic always drew a mob. There was music, beer, contests, entertainment and supper served at the field. Even the weather gave us a break—a real summer day.

# What's More Fun Than Fun?

Acres of outdoor space provided ample room for milling throngs, there was no seating shortage, and long hours of summer daylight meant no lighting problem. It was the ideal way to get together with a minimum of frills. Thus, many of our recreational activities took place in the open. Weather was always a hazard but we took a chance.

The athletic and drill field had a raised platform that doubled as a boxing ring and a stage. Here we gathered often to see a traveling USO troupe; occasionally there was a field day or a picnic to take our minds off the ever-pushing work. Almost every night there was a ball game, one of the series of organized league hard- and soft-ball contests or, if the field was not being used, a pick-up game.

Somewhere on the island we could always find rest and relaxation in a small "family" picnic in the hills on an off day.



Field day featured a hot contest between officers and men on the dusty diamond. The score is best forgotten. Several diamonds dotted the large athletic area.



Feminine charm could always be depended upon to attract a high percentage of those not tied down to their jobs.



We never did learn how it was done, but it was first-rate entertainment. We were even more confused than we thought possible after the show of magic was over.



Tension loosened up and cares disappeared for a fleeting hour once in a while when we were able to go up the river to a secluded spot and open a bottle of beer.

# LIBERTY



IT WAS A SMALL TOWN, really only a village, but it had the things we wanted. Like our base, it was muddy all winter and dusty in the summer. There were no paved roads; wooden sidewalks—where there were walks—and all the appearances of one of our own frontier towns of long ago greeted us when we went on "liberty."

There was an interesting historical background behind it all, though, for those that cared to learn about it. Others preferred just touring up and down the rutted streets and going into store after store on buying sprees.

Liquor and beer—when available—were high priced. Food brought a steep figure, but it was worth it, we thought, because it gave us an opportunity to order what we wanted and how we wanted it. Little did it matter that it meant paying five or six times the amount we were used to handing the cashier at home. Souvenirs (some were native, many not) took a pretty sum from our pockets.

"Liberty" meant only a few hours of such life a month. We came, we spent and we went back to the base—usually flat broke but happy.



A SHOPPING DISTRICT during the morning hours. "Liberty" hours were always during the afternoon; morning business consisted only of trading by civilian residents.

ALWAYS A FAVORED BACKGROUND for "liberty" snapshots was this ancient Russian church, one of the historical landmarks. During our stay it was destroyed by fire.




AMUSEMENT CENTER for "liberty-bent" Seabees was this section of the town. By mid-afternoon it looked like the world's busiest street; by evening it was dead again. Most of the establishments catered to fun-seekers and we welcomed the chance to "bust loose" once in a while.



# Anglers

We heard about it before but, even after seeing it, we scarcely could believe it was true. Lakes, streams, rivers and pools were all around us; all of them turned out to be a fisherman's heaven.

Salmon, returning to the fresh water streams to spawn after touring the seas, clogged the icy-cold waterways with their fighting and struggling streamlined shapes.

Trout, real battlers, lured many a man off to some pool during the long twilight of the evenings to try his wiles against the Dolly Vardens and the other cousins of the trout family.

The catches, what we couldn't eat immediately, were hung up in our smoke houses. We soon acquired a "taste" for this native delicacy.



Salmon, not the largest we caught, make a fine display for only a minimum of time spent catching them.



Dolly Vardens, a yard of the shining beauties, all yours for only thirty minutes' sport with a fly rod at one of the streams.

# PERPETUAL PROMOTION

THAT'S WHAT IT REALLY WAS. Perpetual promotion, in half a hundred varieties.

In the beginning there was a time when we didn't have a cent to set up even a peanut stand. But it wasn't long before we could boast of not only peanuts but a whole section of stores and shops and personal services that were the envy of the whole base.

Initial funds for the venture were provided by voluntary subscriptions to loan ship's service money to open a store—all loans to be paid back in full from the profits. Selling prices were set at only a little above actual cost; sales volume and energetic promotion took care of the rest.

Ship's service profits, once the boom was under way, were turned over to the welfare department for its operation. From this fund came the money for picnics, movies, entertainment, books and magazines and the like.

Incidentally, the publishing of this book is made possible at no cost to the men of the battalion because of welfare funds derived from our ship's service profits.



WE MADE OUR OWN ICE CREAM and dished out hundreds of gallons a week. Sometimes we got fancy with flavors and made sundaes. Then again, when supplies were slow coming in, it was just plain vanilla. Whatever it was, we couldn't get too much.



THE TAILOR SHOP took a lot of worries off our minds. Most of our needle and thread work was turned over to its expert craftsmen.



JUST A SMALL PART of our ship's service laundry is shown here. A complete laundry service, including ironing, was available free of charge.



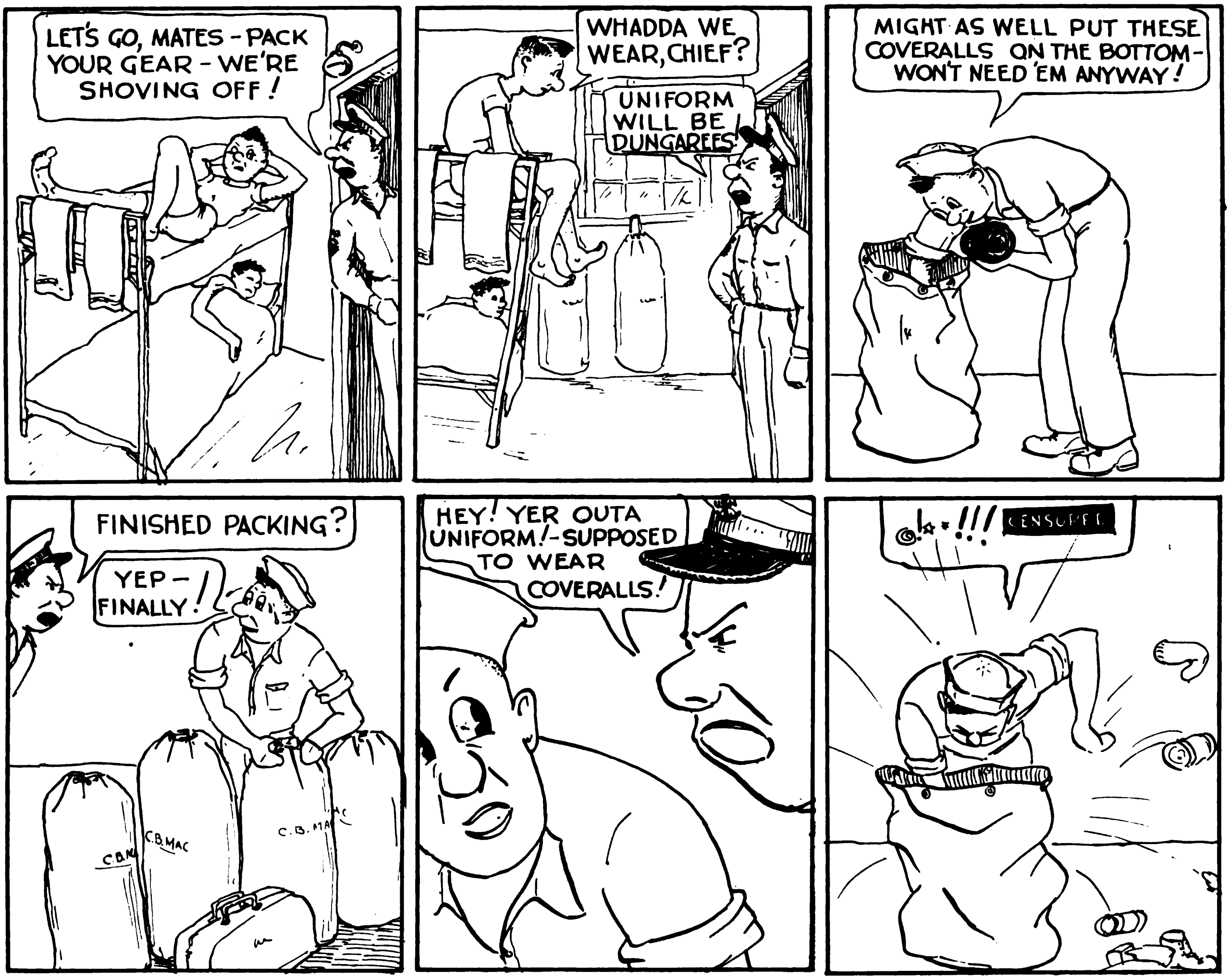
OUR BATTERY OF BARBERS held forth in a skid-shack to keep us trimmed up in a military manner. Everything from a "boot" style to the latest Hollywood creation was ours for the asking.



SOX TO SOUVENIRS, tooth paste to tobacco and soap to pretzels graced the shelves of our ship's service store. This was our cross-roads country store with a touch of modern merchandising.




OUR BUSINESS SECTION, viewed from the outside, shows the barber shop, tailor shop and ship's service—in that order. Not shown are the photo-lab, soda fountain, beer emporium, laundry and office buildings.




# WE MOVE—AND SPLIT

Anybody with half an eye could see it coming. We had arranged ourselves quite comfortably in our snug skid-shacks. Most of us had "procured," some way or another, lockers in which to stow our personal gear; how to live out of a sea bag was almost forgotten. We had radios, entertainment to suit any taste, the athletic field and our next-door streams and hills for recreation. It was getting too home-like. That is always the Seabee signal for a move to a new scene of operations, some place where you can start from scratch again.

Fast-flying scuttlebutt turned into gospel truth. We *were* taking a trip. All of us began lightening our loads, weeding out those things that we had carried with us for months "just in case." Books and souvenirs were sent home, extra and never-used clothing was turned in, packs of old letters were burned.

Each of us formed a private opinion as to the dress of the day for departure. Packing our bags accordingly, we found that no matter what our guess was, it never was right. Dig and re-pack . . . every couple of hours.

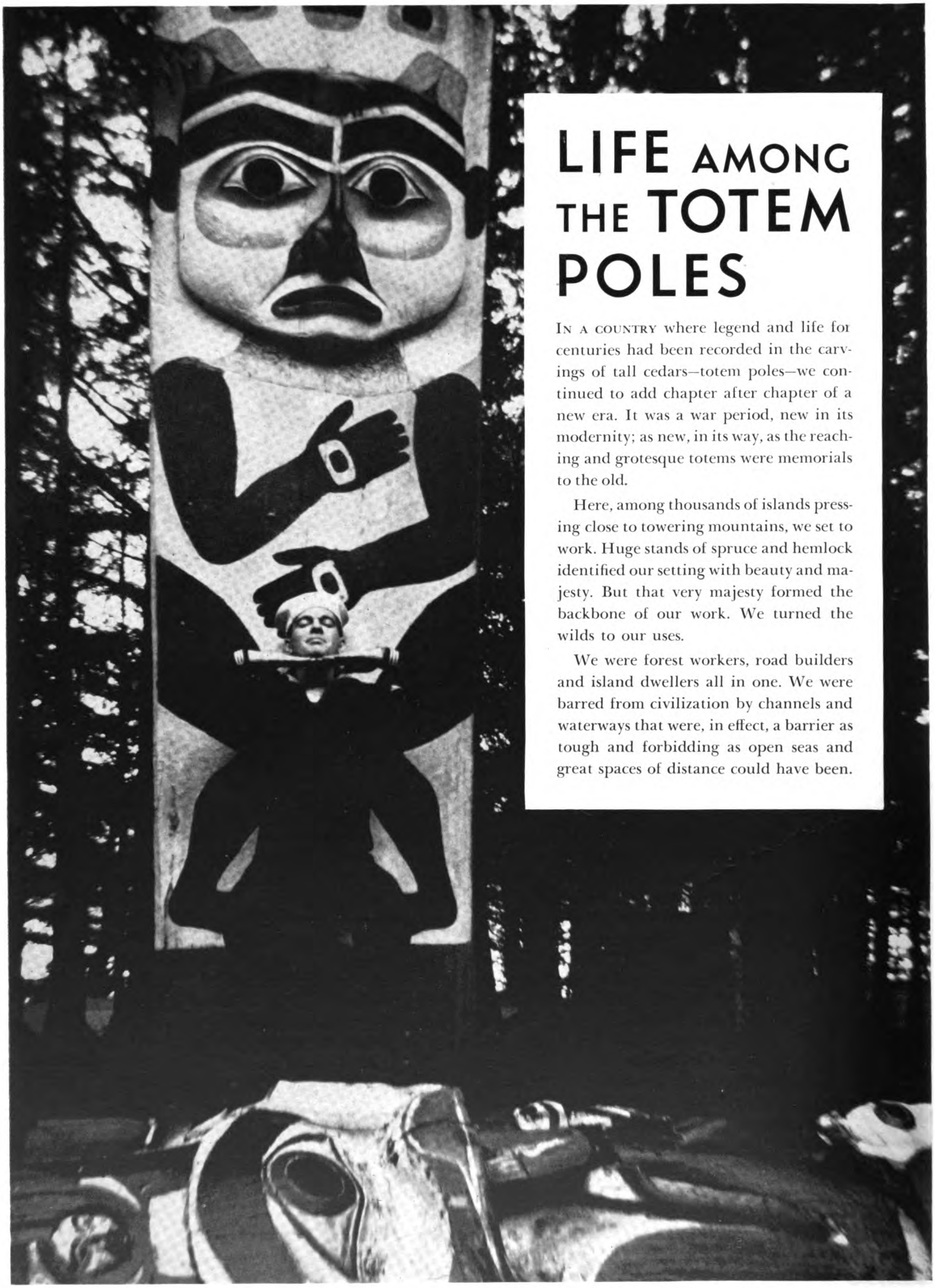
So we expected to be on our way any day and we were ready for it. But not in the manner in which it finally happened. Even when the first gang had packed up and left we still could not quite believe that we soon would be split up into detachments to take over separate jobs at widely scattered bases.

Some of us went back to the timber-covered islands in the Land of the Totem Poles to carry on construction of bases and make installations along that sea-swept stretch. Here we split again, into smaller groups, taking over projects at isolated outposts. For us it was "goodbye" to the rest of the battalion for the duration of our tour of duty. We were not to see them again until we all were back in the Old Country.

The rest of us headed west—one main body and a smaller detachment. It was not as easy as that, though; it was a nightmare of starts and stops, transfers from one ship to another, loading and unloading, hitch-hiking and thumbing our way. Somehow we made it.

Of those of us making the western tour, the smaller gang finally assembled and set up shop to see what could be done about changing a few square miles of mud and slush and temporary buildings into a tight, secure, permanent establishment.

Still farther out on the Northern Highway to Victory, to a bleak and untouched island, went the rest of us—the main body of the battalion. When we first glimpsed its shoreline we knew what was ahead of us. It looked like a long, dreary stretch before we could hope to join the rest for the journey home.



# LIFE AMONG THE TOTEM POLES

In a country where legend and life for centuries had been recorded in the carvings of tall cedars—totem poles—we continued to add chapter after chapter of a new era. It was a war period, new in its modernity; as new, in its way, as the reaching and grotesque totems were memorials to the old.

Here, among thousands of islands pressing close to towering mountains, we set to work. Huge stands of spruce and hemlock identified our setting with beauty and majesty. But that very majesty formed the backbone of our work. We turned the wilds to our uses.

We were forest workers, road builders and island dwellers all in one. We were barred from civilization by channels and waterways that were, in effect, a barrier as tough and forbidding as open seas and great spaces of distance could have been.

# MODERN HISTORY IN AN ANCIENT SETTING



By water we carried the "makings" which we later turned into strong concrete. Some spots were so inaccessible that water transportation was used exclusively.

Today's war lords, using their lightest weapons, would soon make the ancient but well-preserved log blockhouse nothing but a smoldering pile of scraps and slivers.

Once it was a symbol of security in a frontier country; from its ports poked the trade muskets of old, barking a wild and fierce challenge to all who dared invade.

Many eyes coveted the fur-, timber-, and ore-rich territory in those days.

Now, more than a hundred years later, we were the owners of the land, the holders of its riches. And it was our turn to protect it. Steel and concrete, roads and communications were the things now that were proof against aggression. Blockhouses of logs and timber belonged in the past.

So we turned to the job ahead of us—to build, strong and impregnable, what we possessed. In a history-studded totem pole we cut a new face, one that reflected rugged pioneering within sight of civilization.



More than a hundred years ago the log walls of this blockhouse formed a solid bastion of defense in a primitive wilderness. Today most of the wilderness is untouched and unspoiled. It demands modern defense and we went to work with a will, that the beauty and grandeur be protected.



One of the tallest of them all, this totem stretches up better than fifty feet into the air, every figure telling a story we little understood.



St. Michael's Church, a dominant and imposing structure of the old days when Russian interests held sway, faces down a main business thoroughfare of today.

# AGES APART

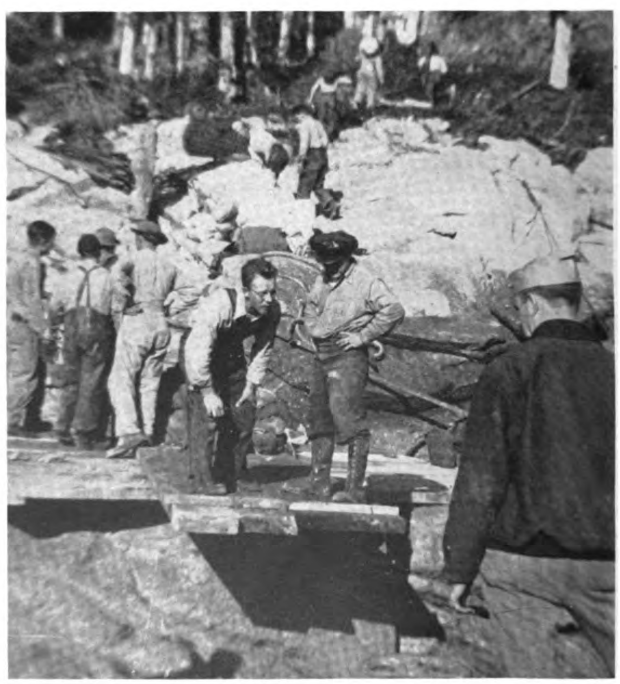
Harking back into dim pages of history we found everywhere a reminder of what had gone on before us. Sky-reaching totems told tales of native lore with their tribal emblems, their coats-of-arms of old Indian families. They were public announcements, declaring to all who viewed them that these marked the property holdings of the first land owners.

Reminders of the later Russian occupation could be seen in the aging churches, established long ago as an opening wedge for the civilization that was expected to follow. First came the church, then settlers and commerce.

To a country used to fast scene changing, we prepared to add a touch of modern, and maybe grim, realism.



Over hills and through forests we had to build our own narrow-gauge railway to transport supplies to our base far into the interior of the island.



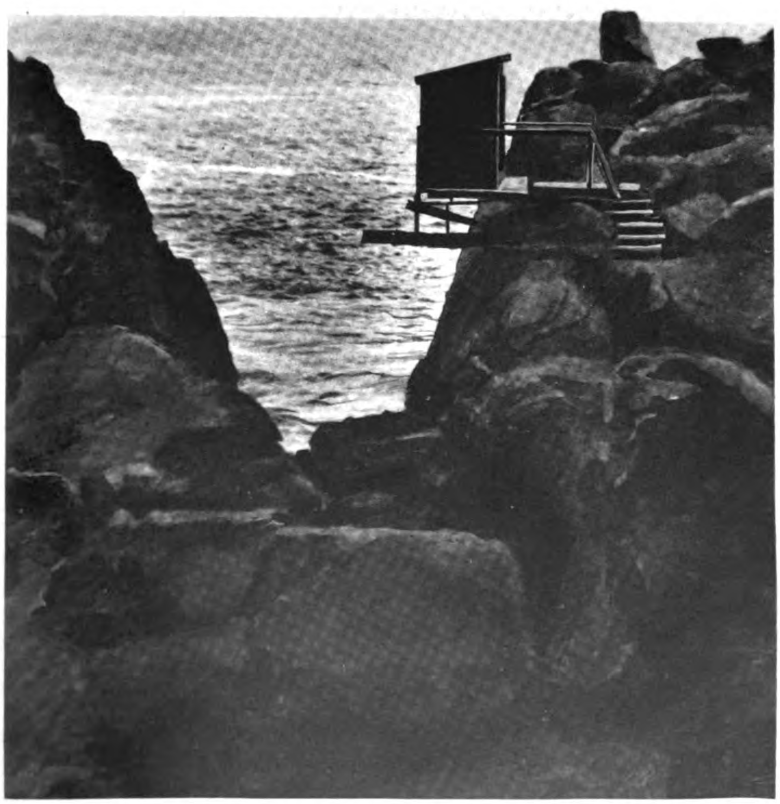
This frontier country gave us construction headaches. No small problem were the granite-hard rocks which covered almost every inch underfoot.



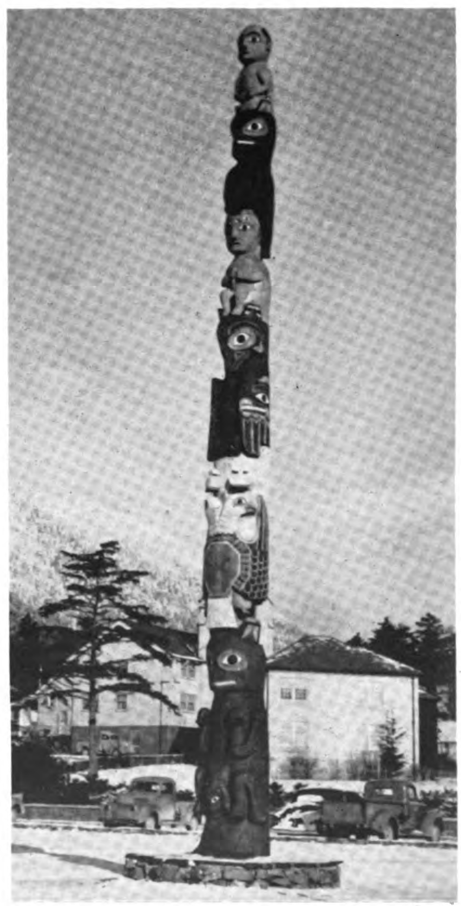

MARKING THE ENTRANCE to a federal forest preserve we found these Thunder Birds. Indians believed that these sacred images produced rain. They must have been right for we were plentifully drenched for months while we worked.



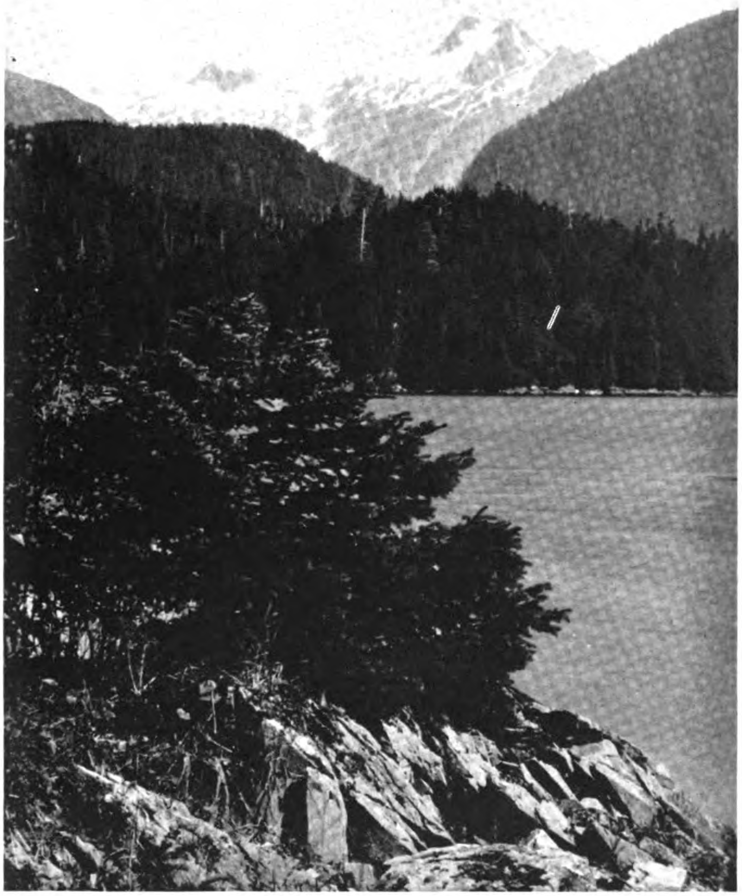

IN MUTE TESTIMONY of the days when explorers and traders were opening the country in an effort to bring prosperity to the commercial interests of Russia are these graves of Russian sailors. It was a country then peopled with those who could not easily be broken to the will of the outsider.



ON ONE OF OUR ROCKY ISLAND OUTPOSTS, nicknamed Alcatraz, we constructed a time-tested bit of rustic plumbing. Perched some eighty feet above the pounding surf, it was later dashed to the rocks below in a storm.



AN OGLE-EYED WELCOME was accorded us by this totem on the "liberty" pier when we took time off for play. In contrast are modern homes in the background.



Nature, in her best and most scenic garb, surrounded us and all of our work. Above the timber-line it was cold enough to assure us of a snowy view all year 'round. Here a snow-filled depression forms a natural cross in the distance.



One of our Seabees adds a lively touch to an ancient tribal symbol by assuming a Thunder Bird pose at the base of a 100-year-old totem pole at the edge of the forest.

# TREES AND TOTEMS

Viewed from a distance, our new location was one of rugged wildness and unsurpassed beauty. It was a country that had been mastered in part only—mastered by the rough and ready pioneer element.

Any continuation of development meant that it must be done by those possessing the same qualities of the old-timers. The hard work of trail blazing fell to us.

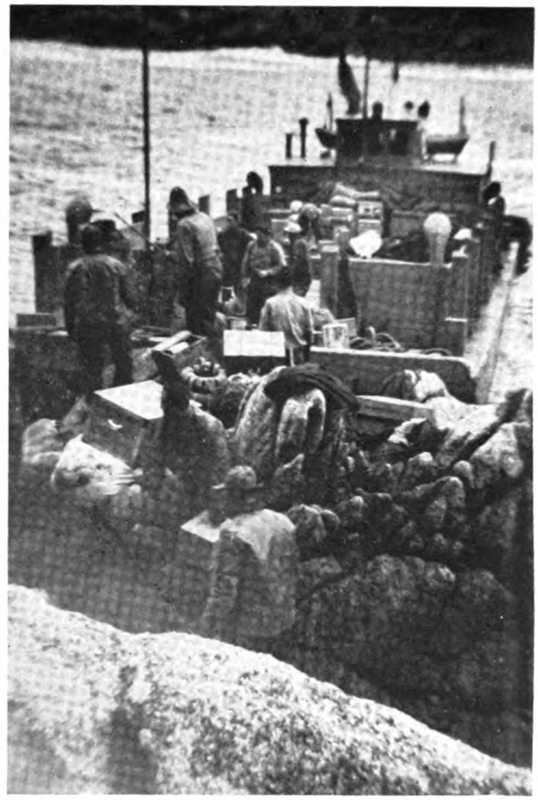
There were roads to build with every block and barricade that Nature could think up strewn in our way. The country itself was characterized by water, rock, forests and mountains; any one alone made it hard going. But we had to buck a combination of all four.

We became loggers first, cutting and hacking paths through the timbered, rocky terrain. Majestic giants of spruce and cedar, the kind the old natives had picked out for their tribal totems, fell before our axes.

Rocks next were blasted out to level up the winding future road bed which would soon allow us to carry our materials to locations picked for other projects. Every bit of the supplies and building necessities—sand, aggregate, cement, and the like—came to us over the water in barges which we unloaded by hand as they nosed up to the rocky shore and then backed away to miss the rolling and fast-breaking waves. We performed this act over and over.



STILL DAMP from a morning's work in the woods, we head out again for the project after a good, hot dinner at the outpost. Much of our work was done in the rain, probably caused by the Indian Thunder Birds.



TO LAND SUPPLIES, our barge edged up to the rocks, tossed over a few crates, and then backed away from the breakers. The act was repeated time after time.



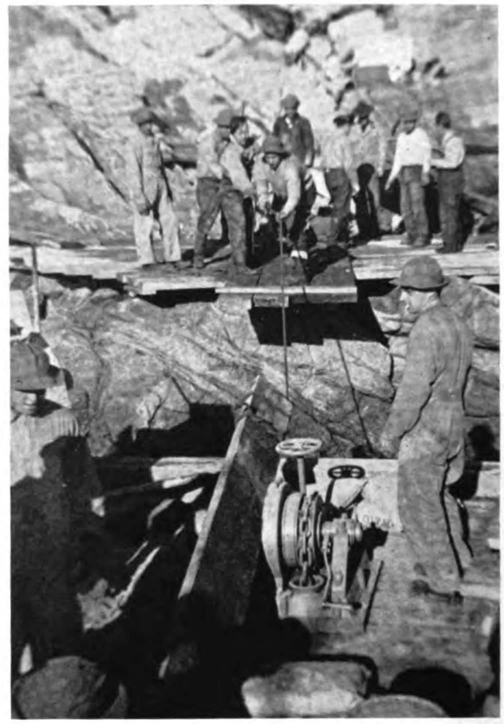
WITH BULLDOZERS we pushed our way through the primitive forest beds when the timber had been cleared away. It was the first time much of the virgin soil had ever been touched with the blades of modern machinery. Often we had to clear muskeg to a depth of six feet to hit a solid foundation. But this was war building and that meant speed. We hustled along using every short-cut we knew.




# SEABEE SUBURB

OCCASIONALLY WE SAW the lights and show windows and stores of "downtown." Most of the time we were too busy, though, so we stayed out in the "suburbs" we were creating to give strength and security to the towns that were already established.

Because these "suburbs" were so rugged and inaccessible they had been disturbed but infrequently by man. We had to start from scratch.

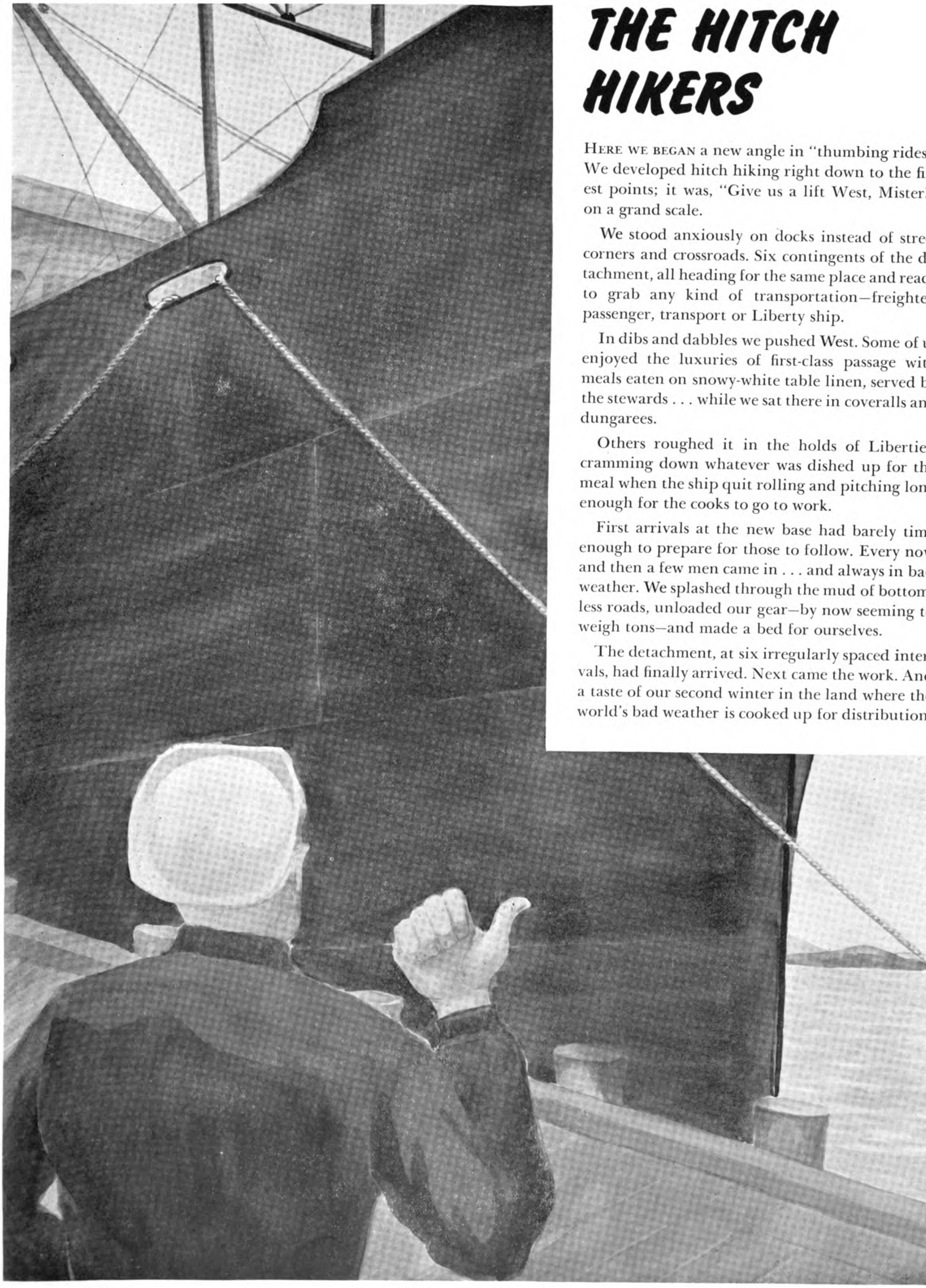


UNLOADING meant plenty of muscle work. Every piece of lumber, every sack of cement, was transferred by hand.



OUR OWN GEAR, construction equipment, materials and supplies all came to us by barge when the weather permitted. Often it was a long time between barges but if we received some long-awaited mail or a few cases of beer we felt that we could stick it out until another trip could be made.

It was almost impossible to build a dock or unloading facility. Once, we actually accomplished the task only to have a storm take it away from us.



# THE HITCH HIKERS

HERE WE BEGAN a new angle in "thumbing rides." We developed hitch hiking right down to the finest points; it was, "Give us a lift West, Mister?" on a grand scale.

We stood anxiously on docks instead of street corners and crossroads. Six contingents of the detachment, all heading for the same place and ready to grab any kind of transportation—freighter, passenger, transport or Liberty ship.

In dibs and dabbles we pushed West. Some of us enjoyed the luxuries of first-class passage with meals eaten on snowy-white table linen, served by the stewards . . . while we sat there in coveralls and dungarees.

Others roughed it in the holds of Liberties, cramming down whatever was dished up for the meal when the ship quit rolling and pitching long enough for the cooks to go to work.

First arrivals at the new base had barely time enough to prepare for those to follow. Every now and then a few men came in . . . and always in bad weather. We splashed through the mud of bottomless roads, unloaded our gear—by now seeming to weigh tons—and made a bed for ourselves.

The detachment, at six irregularly spaced intervals, had finally arrived. Next came the work. And a taste of our second winter in the land where the world's bad weather is cooked up for distribution.



# HAZY HEIGHTS AND HUB

WE BUILT IT OURSELVES on a soggy, wind-swept hill and there we lived. Row upon row of tents, connected by an intricate pattern of board cat-walks and steps that followed the leaping contours of Hazy Heights. At a short distance was the mess hall, a quonset hut arrangement, that completed our almost self-sufficient little canvas city.

There were the barber shop, the "head"—a town hall of sorts—the police and fire departments, the saw shed and carpenter shop, the coal pile, the post office and censors' tent, and the bulletin boards that regulated our lives and became part of them.

Within sight of the Heights was the Hub. From it came all the work assignments and orders that kept the detachment rolling smoothly along with the administrative help of the sergeant of the guard, and the welfare, disbursing and personnel offices.





# TUNDRA TAXI

AND A CROWDED TAXI, IT WAS! The busses, the el's and the jammed subways of a former day appeared to be but a trifle to a Bee and his heavy winter clothing when he tried to crowd both of them aboard one of the man-haul trucks bound for the various jobs scattered about the base.

The biggest share of our stay here coincided with the worst possible months of the year, but work went on day and night. There was only one way to meet the gray weather on an equal footing and that was to dress for the dirtiest that could be expected. You could always peel off a layer if, by slim chance, the wind and snow moderated.

To meet any emergency, a supply of clothing and winter footwear was kept on hand at all times in our supply warehouse. Here we traded a pair of leaky shoe-pacs for new ones, a jacket that had given its all in a fight against the elements or a pair of wool sox that had gone down for the count. Scattered among the clothing were an assortment of hand tools, office supplies and even a small library of books.





# WE ARE WIREMEN



NOT ALL OF US RODE TO WORK. At least, not the entire distance; for the telephone and power lines cared little about how far they ran from the nearest road. Then there was only one thing to do—mush to work on snow shoes.

Plenty of hand and back work also went into getting our tools, wire and poles on location. Sometimes it was possible to drag them up the hills and through the valleys behind a snow jeep; and again, when deep drifts would support only a man on snow shoes, we had to revert to transportation means that the natives found best through the test of time.

Once a pole was set, a gigantic task in itself, the long cold hours atop the naked sticks began. Crossarms and braces and insulators had to be hoisted up and handled in the wind which did its best to swing us around the poles much like weather vanes. This was outdoor work that was really "out." We were exposed on all sides.

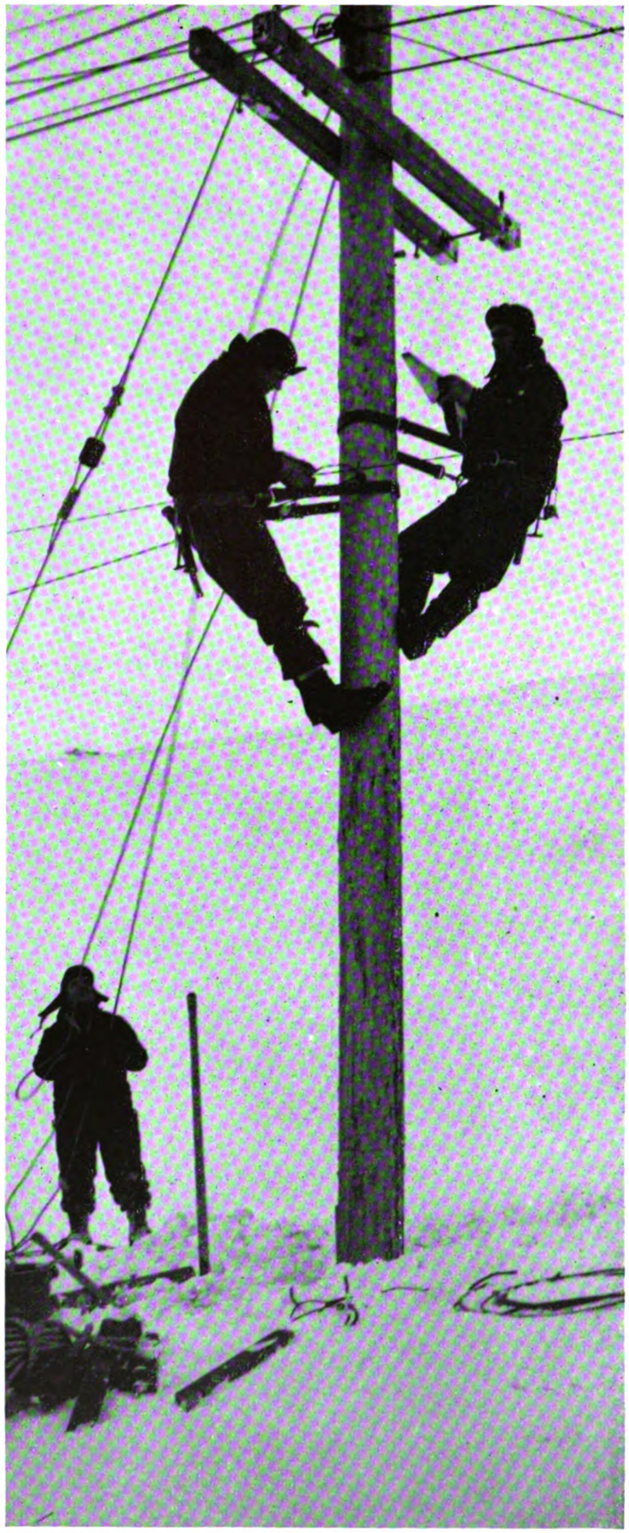
Somehow the line grew longer each day in spite of it all. Quick and sure-fire communications meant security for the base so we pushed on, digging and blasting, setting and guying, pulling and grunting, cussing and laughing.

That's the way a line must go, so that's the way we did it.



# We Dig

THROUGH THE TOP LAYER of ice and snow awaited a surprise for the shovel and spoon wielders. Sometimes they were out of sight before they had cleared away the snow and hit the really tough work. Jack-hammers, dynamite and brawn usually made up the combination for successful digging. Since there was no way to predetermine their location, underground streams added another "surprise" now and then.



# And Climb

HEIGHT OF THE POLES can't be judged at a quick glance. Only the men who sunk the holes could rightly say whether they were tall or short, for often snow covered the ground for five, six, or even more feet. "Grunts" of the ground crew kept the top men supplied with tools and equipment. Then they were ready for a "wire pulling" job, a long, hard grind up and down the uneven terrain while they dragged the strands behind them.

# WE ARE METALMEN

THERE MUST BE A BEGINNING for everything and, in sheetmetal work, as good a place to start as any, is right on paper. After that, the draftsman's drawings are brought up to full scale and laid out on sheets of metal.

Then it's measure, scribe and snip and another air duct or a ventilator is on its way. The demand for our work was great, with the construction of new, big buildings going on all around us.

To make full use of the equipment so that it wasn't idle for a minute, we tossed the key away and worked day and night shifts. Even then it was hard to keep pace with the demands.

Sometimes there were so many jobs in the shop at once that we could scarcely remember, from one minute to the next, where each belonged. It was mass production in a way, though each piece required the attention of a craftsman. There was little rest for the metalmen.





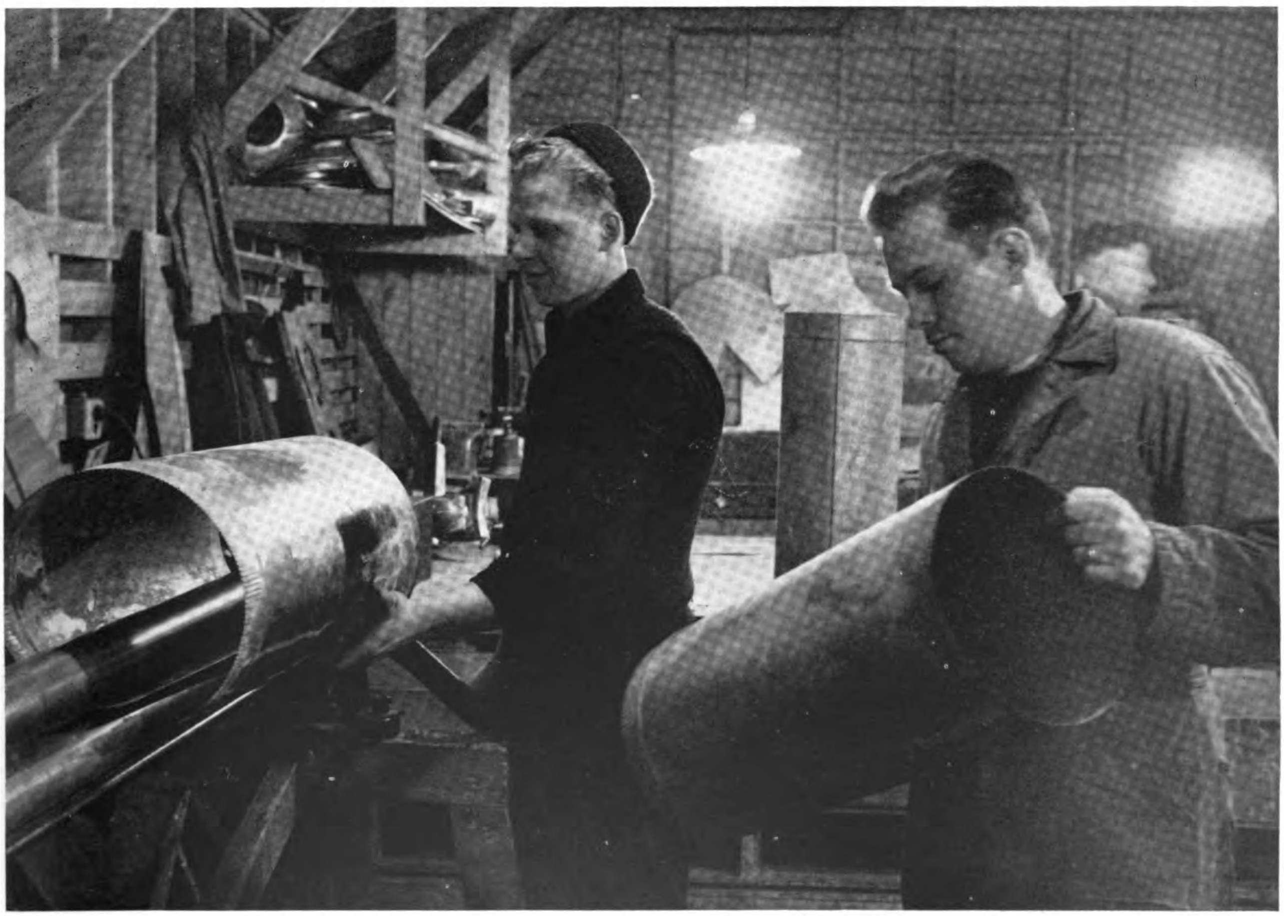




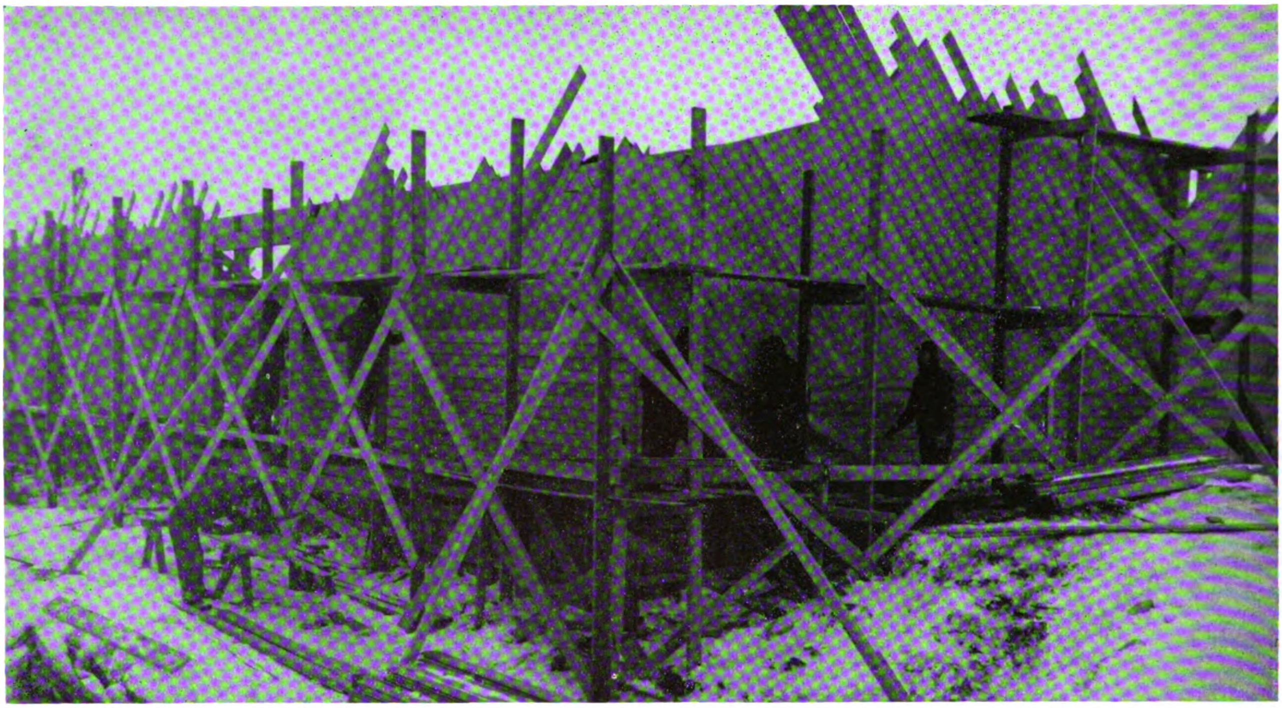
Cutting and welding played a big part in our daily work and it was like old times to handle a torch on the same type of jobs we had turned out for years in civilian life at home.

The right equipment helped us turn out jobs just as they should be done. Sometimes, we had to improvise and substitute, but the result always was just what the specifications called for.

Many of us picked up new ideas, too, from hands that were old at the business. It was a good workable combination.



Heating and ventilation were mighty important in a country where the weather changed every few minutes. Probably that's why we spent so much of our time fabricating big pipes, ducts and stacks. Shop work wasn't all we did, though. When we were ready for installations we went out and built our many separate units into a complete system. Each part had a place and a size; it was part of our work to see that it all fit together.



# WE ARE WOODMEN



IT WAS EVERY MAN TO HIS TRADE wherever possible. Our detachment numbered high in carpenters and general construction men, so to us fell the bulk of the responsibility of erecting the warehouses, offices, machine shops and garages, hospitals and post offices.

Mammoth, but low, sprawling buildings followed in the wakes of our building crews. Day after day they sprung up where shortly before there was only spongy muskeg and snow.

In general, the buildings were of frame construction and their gigantic proportions meant large amounts of manpower. Some of us, six months ago only fair with a hammer and saw, were by now turning into first-class carpenters under the watchful eyes of the old-timers.

Our speed doubled up when we came to prefabricated buildings. These were more like a jigsaw puzzle that needed only to be slapped together but they were small and suitable mainly for minor units. We built dozens of them.

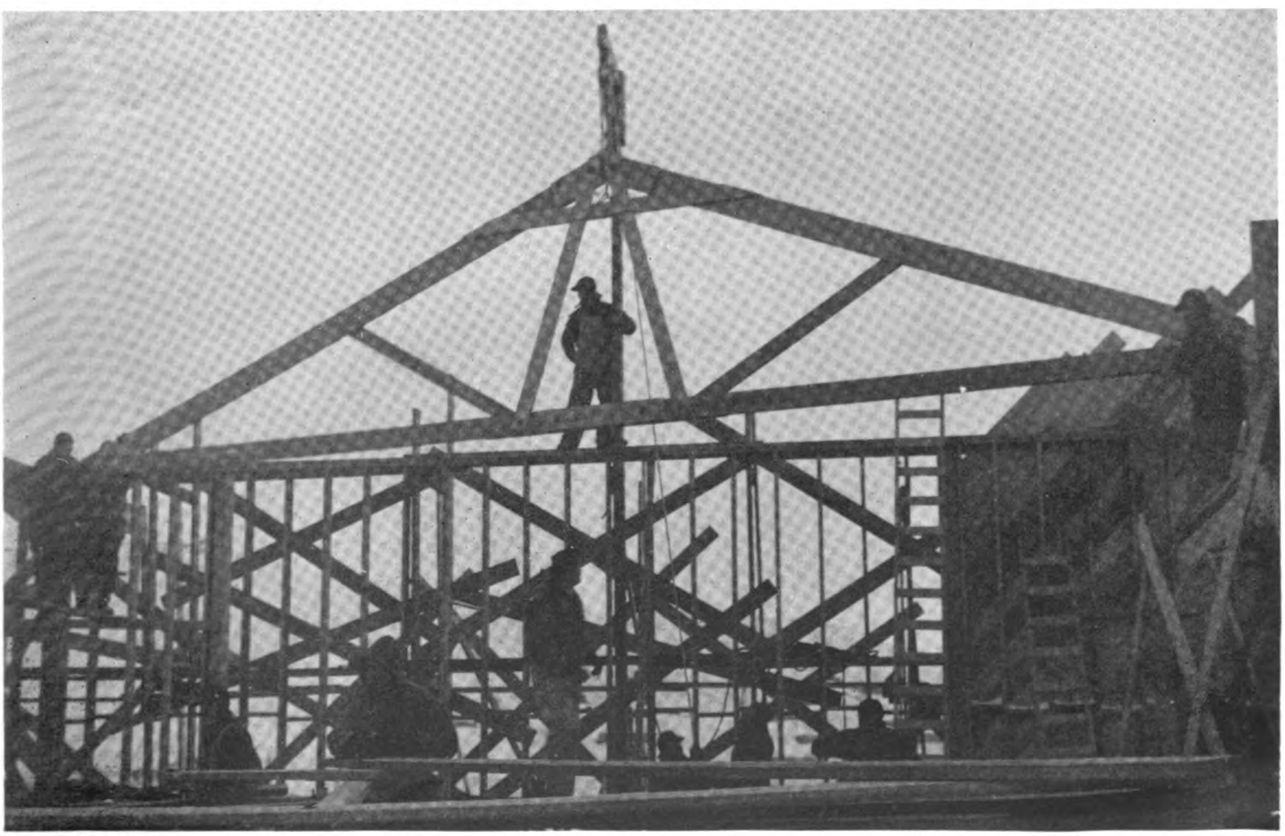
Large warehouses required roof trusses that were bolted together and assembled on the ground, then hoisted into place. We show here how it was done from the first bite of the drill to the erected truss. It also shows why, after the first dozen or so, the buildings got to be a common sight to us.



# Just a Skeleton

READY FOR THE ROOF TRUSSES, we begin raising them so that the building will soon be under cover. By now, we feel the project is pretty well along. We are over the hump.

The bare skeleton, through which the wind whips, isn't much of a shield against the cold so we rush. The sooner the siding and the roof are on, the better working conditions will be. Another good reason for the extra push was the ever-approaching completion date set by the engineering department. They always "wanted it yesterday."





THE SOUND OF HAMMERING never seemed to stop. We drove in tons and tons of nails from one end of the base to the other. One job was scarcely finished before another was lined up and the preliminary grading and clearing accomplished to give us another clean start.

The process kept going right down the line until we had erected a new city where nothing but a lumber yard and water and mud had been before. Every few days, the scene changed until it was hard to recognize old locations, so fast did the valley have its face lifted.

Before we had left a building in its final stage, the new occupants were already doing business there. We HAD to keep on the move.







# WE ARE PIPEMEN



YOU CAN'T TELL the players without a score card, and you can't tell about a job without a blueprint.

Before going ahead, all moves are mapped out and, in theory, the work clicks right along from there on.

Short lengths, long lengths, big ones and little ones all go into the scheme of things once the start has been made. Men with years of experience put their knowledge to work here just as they did back home. Once in a while, a problem may take an extra bit of ingenuity but the Bees came well equipped with that.

Soon this project will have hot and cold running water and forced hot-air heating for the comfort of future occupants.

# WE FINISH THE JOB AND RELAX



THERE'S NO END to the number of little touches that go into a building to make it a bang-up job. Carpenters, plumbers, steam-fitters, sheet-metal men and electricians must all make a final adjustment or an alteration before we can call it quits.

The bulk of the responsibility, however, falls to the painters who argue that it is their craft that shoulders the problem of leaving the project in a blaze of glory.

With the urgency of war pushing them, we "blow on" most of the coats with spray equipment, especially on exterior painting where protection and deceptive coloration are the prime considerations.

Inside, the story is a little different. Here we are subject to "close ups" and sharp-eyed scrutiny, and a good job is in order. Sometimes, as on this gym job, floor finishing also gets a touch of the painters' skill and workmanship.

The last man off the job, the painters can heave a sigh of relief and say, "It's finished." But tomorrow there'll be another task awaiting them.





**Final touches** turned a building into a finished product in a hurry when we turned loose our spray guns that cut a swath six to eight feet wide or even wider if it had to be.

Best of all was the pause that refreshes—a combination of a black-bottomed coffee pot and a hot stove. Represented here are most all of the trades at rest; carpenters, plumbers, steam-fitters, painters and electricians "recuperating" for a few minutes.

Shortly, it will be out in the weather and back to work. Day after day.



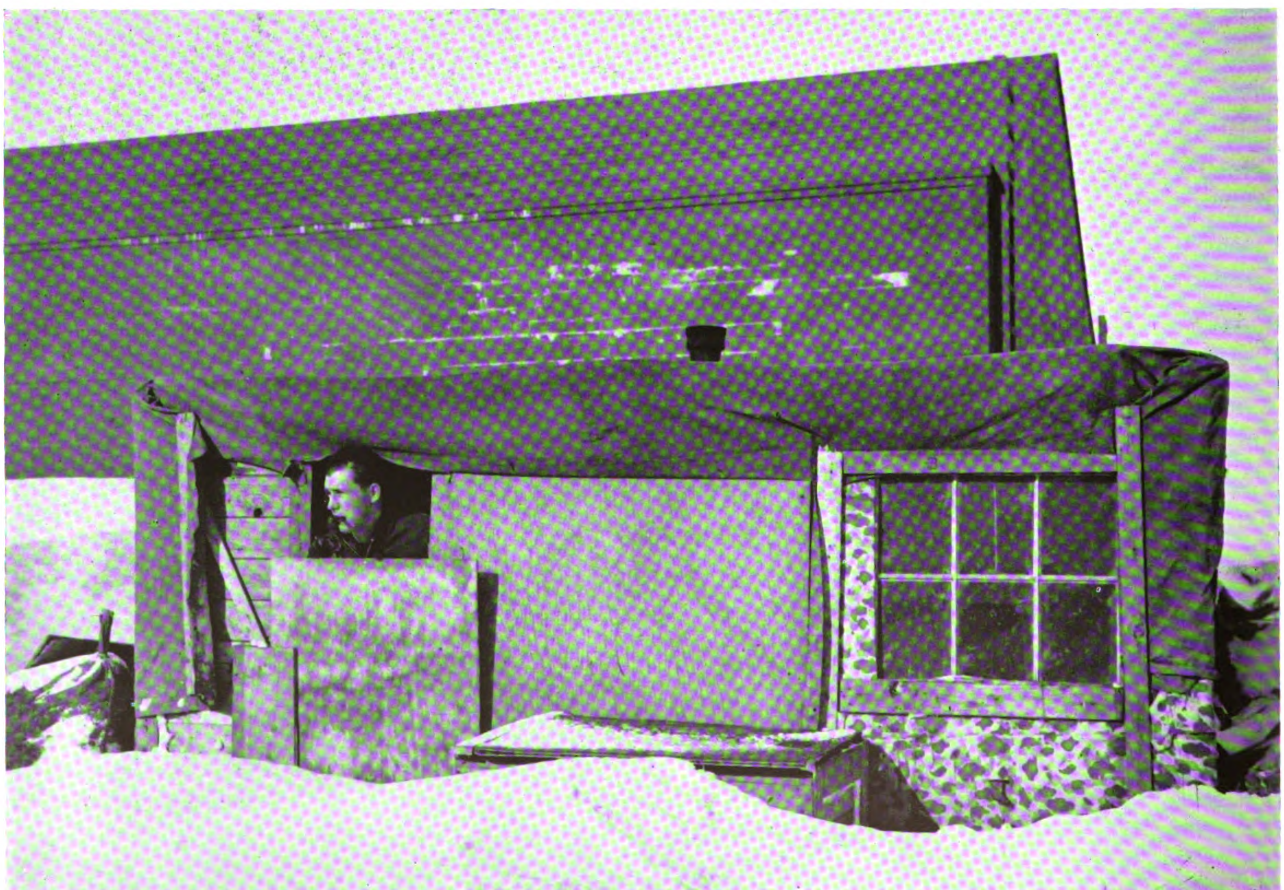
# WE STAND WATCHES AND DIG DITCHES



UNGLAMORIZED AND UNSUNG are we, the men who break the first ground and dig the ditches for drainage, pipe lines and foundations. Yet the job can't be started until we complete the preliminary excavating.

Sometimes we are helped by modern machinery and sometimes we dig it up alone. If there is any construction to be done, it is hard to stay away from a pick and shovel. They have a way of going right along with all building. The exercise is health-giving, but no one seems to care for its benefits. Handling a shovel with a "five-foot boom" is work, plain and simple.

Should wind or fire take over one of our projects, all is lost. So we maintain careful watches 'round the clock, sometimes to keep carefully guarded fires burning and sometimes to see that there is no fire at all. It's as important as the actual work itself.





# WE LIVE TOGETHER AT HAZY HEIGHTS

No one ever missed a trip to the head at least once a day. Immediately that put the stamp of approval on this Palace of Plumbing as the logical, if unofficial, center of detachment activities. Here we met, regardless of trade, occupation or rating, on common ground; here we could let ourselves go. There was no referee and no holds were barred.

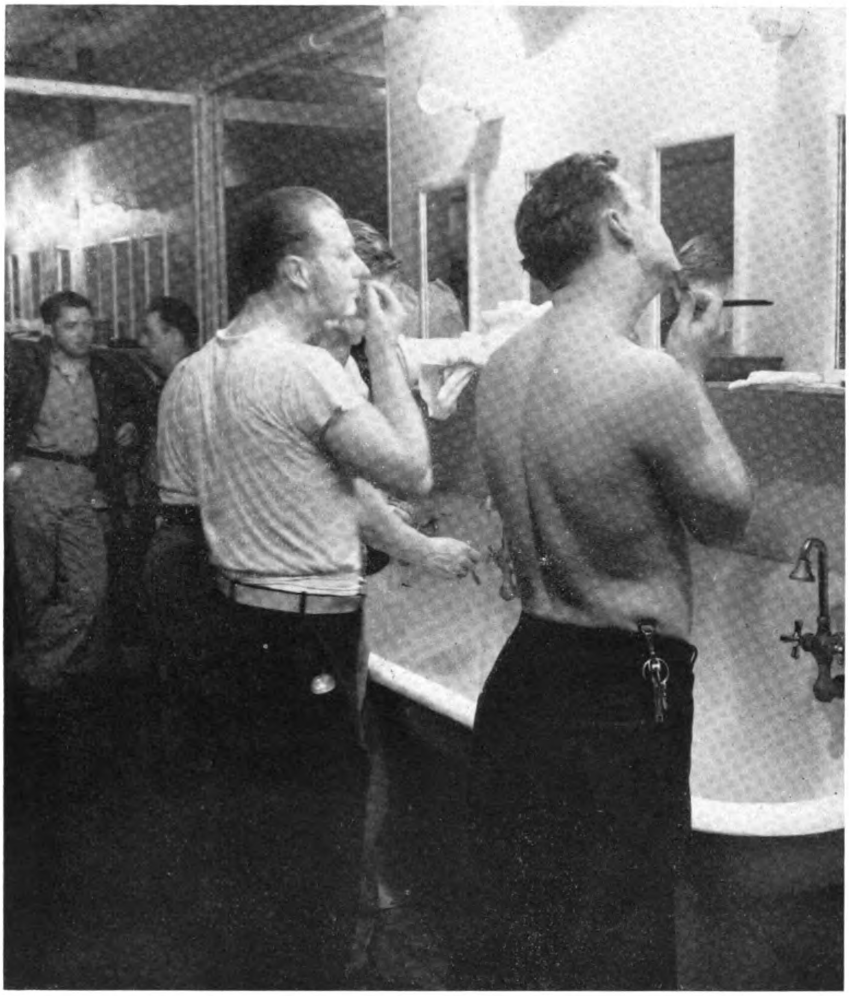
It was a clearing house for scuttlebutt passed from mouth to mouth with a slightly different version every time it was repeated. From the bulkheads, thumb-tacked news clippings and pictures kept us abreast of the changing other world. Radio reports, uttered by one man and heard by ten, could be counted upon to have ten interpretations by the time they hit the head. The Tower of Babel was small time stuff compared to a few minutes there. But it was life as life is dished out in these parts.

Somehow our tracks always turned toward this mecca in a moment of leisure. Maybe we were looking for a friend, or we might even have business there that concerned no one but ourselves.

We even found it a good place to track down a cup of coffee. This was accomplished by trailing anyone departing with a jug of hot water. Hot water usually meant coffee. We noted the tent the water went into and then casually dropped around a few minutes later.

Work assignments were posted on the bulletin board there, making it an employment agency of sorts.

No matter how many little, individual parts made up our lives in Hazy Heights, there was no denying that the Captain of the Head and his establishment took top honors and a 4.0 rating as THE place to go.



# SHAVE AND A HAIRCUT

BETWEEN WORKING, eating and sleeping there wasn't much time to be spent in personal beautification. Certainly there were no signs of the opposite sex that might induce us to pretty up. But force of habit — and a few Navy regs — prodded most of us into the head for a shave. Not every day, maybe, but pretty often. Full beards were outlawed.

Privacy being one of the things we left back with our civilian clothes, we nonchalantly washed and scraped our faces to the accompaniment of assorted jokes (wise and otherwise), pushing and jostling, noise and the other fellow's elbow under our nose.

The ritual of the shower and other matters which we once had performed only behind closed doors were, by now, turned into public exhibitions.

Hair, too, came in for an occasional going over at the hands of our barbers. Whatever scuttlebutt had been missed at the head was certain to be mentioned in the barber shop. Besides that, it was a good place to fill in a half hour when there wasn't much doing in the entertainment line on a particularly dull evening.






# MAIL COMES AND GOES



Top honors in popularity—and also unpopularity, at times—go to the men who handle the mail. We didn't give them any rest, morning, noon or night. No matter what else happened, mail, lots of it, was all that counted.

Occasional spells of good weather meant Air Mail, by far the most precious and sought after event in our lives. It meant a late word from home, and reminded us that we were missed by someone. Then all our troubles vanished.

Newspapers and packages usually came to us by ship. A little slower service but almost as welcome. Regardless of what kind of mail it was, no time was lost in "working it," deliveries sometimes being made during the night. It was the only time we missed any sleep without growling. The mail men were welcome any time.

For security, outgoing mail went through our censors' hands. Reading hundreds of letters each day, they deleted—or chopped up, as some would say—references that might endanger all our efforts toward the war's end. A tough but necessary job.

# ARMORER, FIRE MARSHAL, AND M. A. A.



FIRE IS ANOTHER ENEMY that must be constantly watched. This task fell to our armorer who also served in the capacity of fire marshal. In a few minutes, months of our hard work would have been nothing but a heap of ashes once the blasting wind started fanning a hidden blaze.

When not busy around Hazy Heights and on the construction sites ferreting out fire hazards, he could be found in the armory demonstrating to us the best ways to keep our ordnance gear in shape.

Law and order fell under the jurisdiction of the Master at Arms force. Usually, we gave them little reason to go to work, for we were fairly well behaved.

But if it had to be, they had a persuading way about them in getting any information they desired. Just to keep in practice, they occasionally demonstrated their system on a victim so that all might behold the fate of the transgressor.





Best way of topping off a hard day was to unlimber the vocal cords in an informal song session or to run through a few numbers on the strings. First preference in the line of musical instruments appeared to be "geetars" with fiddles a close second.



Not all recreation took place indoors. When the weather permitted, we took advantage of the hills and snow to get in a few hikes, snow-shoeing or skiing in either the horizontal or upright style. For many of us, it was the first time we had ever tasted the tang of winter sports.



# Odd Moments

Plans for a leave and where to spend it were the main subjects of talk even before we had completed the first year of overseas duty. While we huddled around the stove and drank hot coffee to take the chill out of our bones, nothing raised our spirits more than looking through travel folders. Particularly those that advertised the desert resorts of the West.

Early rising meant turning in at a reasonable hour and the reluctant end of another "bull session." And so to bed.

# WE OCCUPY

All of us did our share of base-building under tough Alaska conditions. But to one part of our battalion was given the assignment of starting a base-building job from scratch.

Alone, we took over and occupied a bleak, mist-shrouded Aleutian island, and there we built a mile of America's mighty military road to Tokyo. Alone, we created something where nothing had been before. Alone, we were prepared to defend what we built.

We landed on a barren beach, unloading our supplies and equipment the hard way—over the side of cargo ships on to barges and landing craft, from them on to the beach by "cherry picker" and manpower—especially manpower.

The first days ashore we lived on "K" rations, while we labored around the clock until our bones ached. We sloughed off dripping clothing to grab a few hours rest in damp and heatless tents, then struggled out of a half-sleep to wriggle into still-soggy coveralls and work some more.

Once in a while, as shown in this photo, we ducked behind bulldozers and cranes while high explosives hurled death-dealing missiles through the air.

Always we battled the weather—rains that seeped through "victory" rubber raincoats, rains that made merely walking on the tundra like trying to run with a full pack on a gigantic waterlogged sponge.



# AN ISLAND

Later on came the snow, blocking 'dozers and trucks, piling up in drifts that bridged streams and gullies, blinding in its brilliance on the few days the sun shone.

And always there were the winds—roaring, gusty williwaws which sent rain and sleet and snow biting like needles into our faces, bowled over buildings, rocked our frail tents like small boats on a stormy sea, whipped our bay into a frenzied froth of white foam and angry breakers that dashed supply ships against jagged rocks.

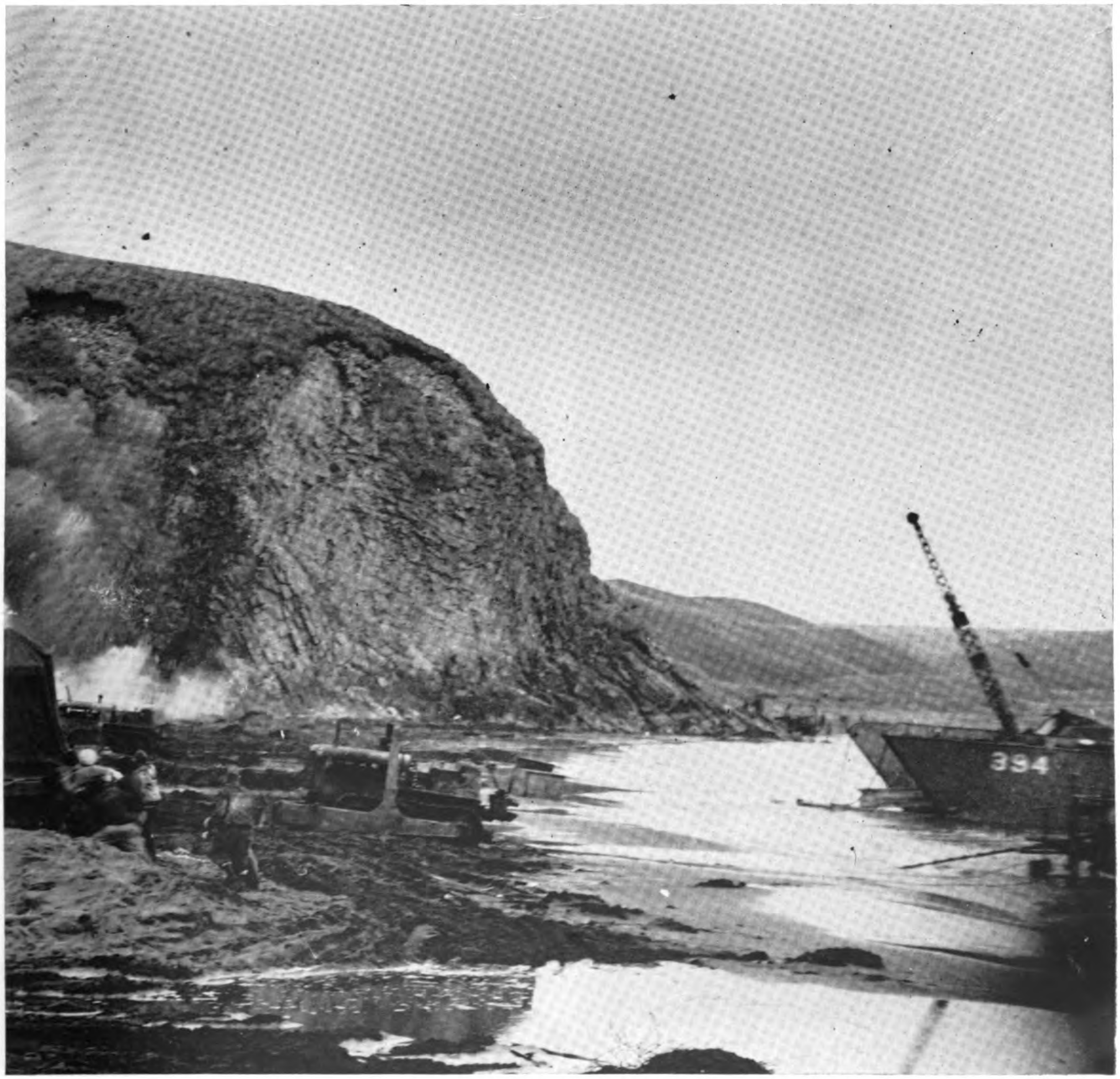
On the waterfront, some of us landlubbing Seabees became sailors, fighting winds and waves to unload ships anchored miles offshore, repairing and rebuilding battered boats and barges, rescuing men and ships from the stormy North Pacific.

And through it all—the rain and the snow and the wind—we fought, too, our own loneliness and the monotony of a life without neon signs and store windows and train whistles . . . and without women.

But we did our job.

When at long last we left our island we had the satisfaction which comes with the knowledge that we had created something for others to use, that we had done a job—a difficult job under trying conditions—which would hasten the day of victory for the United Nations and peace for the world.

On the following pages we tell the story of how we did that job, of how we worked and how we lived, on that lonely island of the grim Aleutians.



# WE PACK UP AND LOAD UP

EVERY SEABEE KNOWS that dither of trying to cram the accumulations of months—plus all required gear—into too few seabags, and the last desperate moment when that 8 x 10 framed, hand-tinted photo of Aunt Mathilda gets tossed into the GI can to make room for that second pair of coveralls.

We who went on this particular journey "to the westward" performed the packing, unpacking, loading and unloading processes so many times it got monotonous. During a storm our first ship developed leaky boilers, so we stopped over for a couple of weeks at a base along the way. Then we hitchhiked on another vessel. Then we spent a night on another ship, some more time at another base, then on still another ship. And so it went.

The pictures on these two pages tell part of the story—but they're just a sample.



PACKING our newly-issued sleeping bags was a three-man job at first—until we developed the handy technique of just jamming them in.



SEABEE AND GEAR—ideal example. Of course, most of us had at least four times this much to pack and repack, worry about—and lug.



WE LOADED ourselves and our gear onto trucks so often we could clamber on half asleep with full pack and two seabags.



WHEN WE arrived at the dock, the trucks always took us to the far end if the ship had tied up to the near end. And if the ship—well, why go on?



NOT ONLY did we go from shore to ship and ship to shore; we also went from ship to ship. This time we boarded LCI's—just to spend the night.



STEADY THERE, mate! A slip on the gangplank meant a dip in the drink for a Bee and his burden. And the Bering Sea was cold!



WHAT WE couldn't carry, we hoisted aboard in a cargo net. We loaded all the cargo on this Liberty ship from dock to barge, barge to ship.



WE PASSED seabags over the deck cargo of fuel, forward to the hatch of the No. 2 hold. We were almost ready for the last leg of our trip.



# WE RIDE THE HIGH SEAS

ESCORT VESSEL nearby, we watched the fog-shrouded shores of one Aleutian island fade into the distance as we hit the open sea and set our course toward the island we were to occupy. We didn't know for sure what lay ahead of us; all we knew was that the going might be a shade rough. But we were anxious to get there. We had been too long on the way.

We passed our time aboard ship by watching the sea slide by, shooting the breeze with the crew, digging into our seabags for foul weather clothing, standing and shivering in the chow line, maybe playing a little poker, and sleeping. We slept in the hold, with only the under half of our sleeping bags between us and the cold, hard, damp deck plates.

About half of us made this last leg of our voyage on a Liberty ship; the rest of us came the next day on an LST (Landing Ship, Tanks).



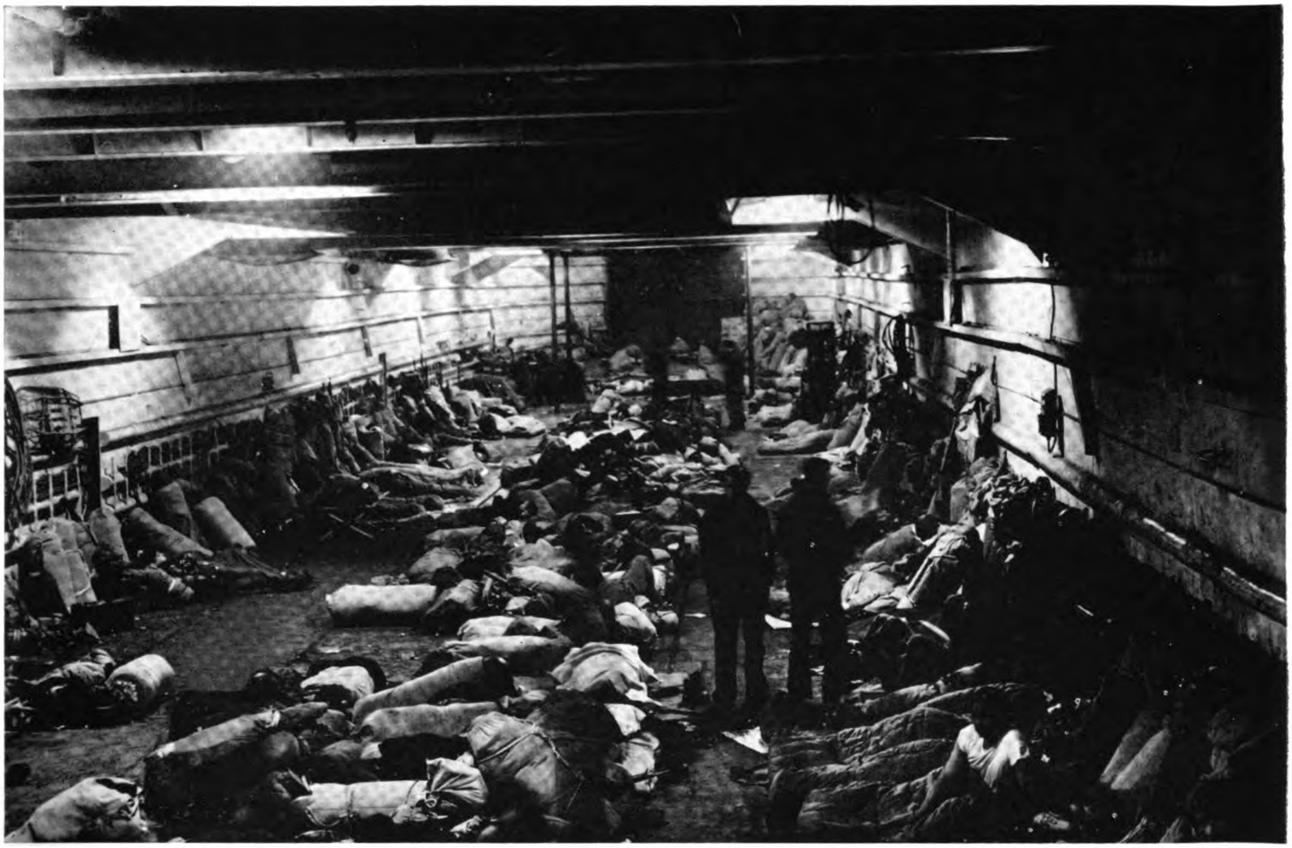
MESS KITS and canteen cups in hand, we stood in line for chow, dished out in the ship's galley. We ate outside, on oil drums and hatches.



KIBITZERS frequently outnumbered the players. Once in a while we went for a game of bridge or hearts or rummy, but usually it was poker.



SLEEPING BEAUTIES. The hardness of the deck made no difference when we were tired. We learned to sleep anywhere, any time.



THE CAVERNOUS HOLD of an LST (above), usually filled with tanks, served as a rocky home on the waves for half of us on the last leg of the voyage to our island. The rest of us were jam-packed in the depths of a Liberty ship hold (below). The Liberty reached the island first.





# WE GO OVER THE SIDE—

THE MORNING of the landing was dull and foggy. Dimly through the mist we could see the hazy outline of our island—our home for months to come.

With military pack—helmet, 40 rounds, '03, mess kit, canteen and all—we lowered ourselves on rickety Jacob's ladders to a rolling pontoon barge. Some of us leaped to a heavily laden LCT which momentarily drew alongside.

When the last man of the landing party felt his feet touch the slippery deck of the barge, we cast off and headed for the unknown beach.

It seemed like a long, long voyage. Outwardly we were casual and calm—but our hearts pounded.

We wondered what we might find on the island. Would it be deserted? Or would there be inhabitants of the wrong kind? Our scouts received final instructions and pocketed their maps.

Gradually the black sand beach grew closer, bigger, more defined. We could see the sand, dead ahead and smooth with an eerie smoothness.

"Get set for the landing!"

We braced ourselves. Diesels roaring, barge and LCT's hit with a jolt. Ramps clattered down. We jumped off and swarmed over the beach. Soon the sand was filled with footprints. We had landed.



ON PONTOON BARGE, our skipper set the course to the beach.



Aboard LCT's and pontoon barge, we pulled away from the Liberty ship and headed toward the island, hazy in the distance. The misty morning was strangely still, except for the lapping of waves on our craft, and the throbbing and churning of our motors, and the pounding on our ribs.

# AND HIT THE BEACH

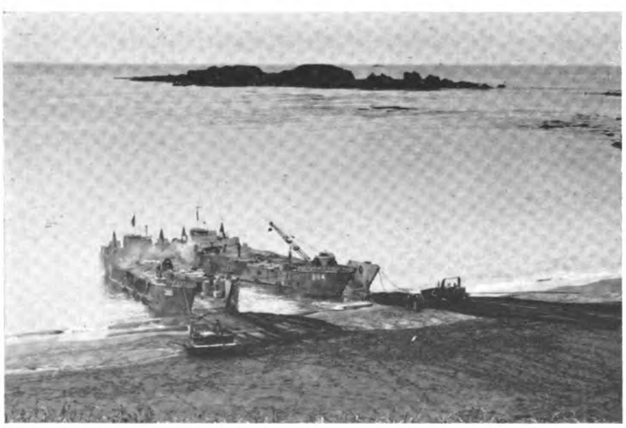





# WE ESTABLISH A BEACHHEAD

THE LANDING was only the beginning. Establishing a beachhead, we discovered, meant lugging tons of crates and cases, dropping them on the sand, picking them up again and hauling them to the supply dump. It meant 12-, 18-, sometimes 24-hour work days. It meant erecting temporary tents on soggy tundra, and living 20 men to the tent. The night crew crawled into the cots the day crew had just vacated.

Establishing our beachhead meant wearing damp clothing for days—clothing that never had a chance to dry out in heatless tents. It meant shuttling from ship to shore night and day with cargo. It meant going without a bath, a shave, even a chance to wash hands and face. It meant getting the worst food—"K" rations—when you needed the most energy. It meant being mad at everybody and everything, but still working with a grin. Photos on this and the following five pages show some of these things.



LONELY LOOKED the beach, and empty, that first morning, as bulldozers bit into the sand and built ramps for unloading the LCT's.



MANY FOOTPRINTS and much lugging of things transformed that empty stretch of sand to the busy beachhead at the top of this page.



EVEN the stout Liberty listed when heavy equipment like this, pulled from the bottom of the hold, was lowered over the side.



LOOK OUT BELOW! Despite frequent heavy seas, which bounced barge and LCT's and broke lines, we unloaded all the cargo without a bad injury.

# Unloading the Cargo Was Our First Job

WE DIDN'T REALIZE so much stuff could be stowed in the holds of a Liberty ship until we unloaded her. From big-boomed motorized cranes, power shovels and bulldozers to the last tent stake, everything was hoisted from the holds and lowered over the ship's side on to the pontoon barge and the LCT's. When these craft brought the cargo to the beach, we handled it all again—at first by manpower, later by small cranes, unloading first on the beach, then carting to the supply dump.



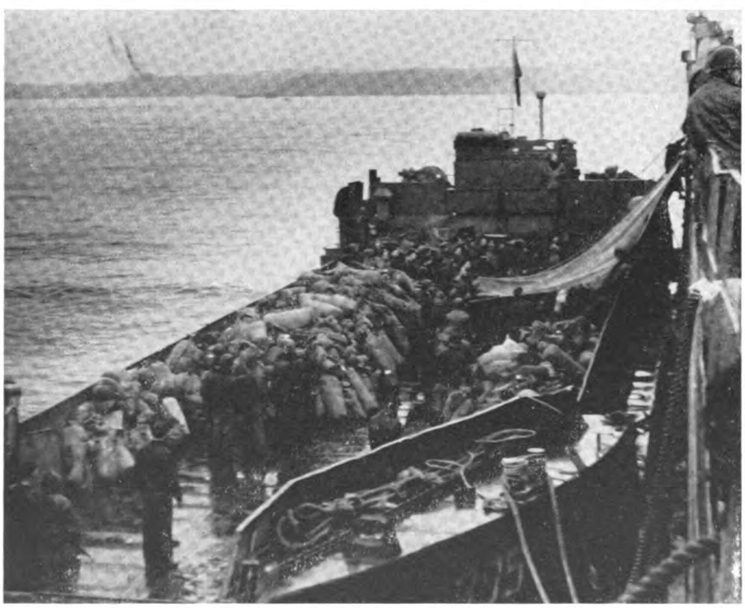
BROUGHT ASHORE, crates and boxes were hauled to the open air "supply department," where we made some order out of the confused jumble.



IF WE TRIED "beating a path" on the tundra we just sank farther in—so we pushed our wheelbarrows on metal mesh mats like these.



SMOKE ARISING from the beachhead added to the gloominess of the atmosphere as the LCT hit the beach with the second contingent on a rainy, misty day. But the arrival of reinforcements was met with anything but gloom. More men meant more hands to do the work.



OUR GEAR slid down a tarpaulin from the LST to the LCT, but we lowered ourselves in a less spectacular manner—over the side on a ladder. Rain and fog nearly hid the island.

# Reinforcements Arrive

WELCOME INDEED to those of us who came ashore first was the arrival of the rest of us, who had made the last leg of the journey aboard the LST.

The second contingent missed the thrill of landing on a barren beach, but we arrived in time to "enjoy" the confusion and mud and eternal wetness of the beachhead—and plenty of hard labor. Our LST didn't beach, so we went over the side to the smaller LCT for our landing.

If any day can be said to be typical of the Aleutians, it was the day we came ashore. It was gloomy, cloudy and wet. It rained most of the day, and by the time we came ashore in a dismal mist, we were pretty well soaked. And when we crawled into cold tents that night, it rained again!



We lugged our seabags and duffle bags ashore and dumped them all in one big sodden heap on the wet sand. Piling them up like this made it more interesting when we tried to find our own, after we had been assigned a few feet of tarpaulin under which to spend the night.



A good swap—soaked and muddy GI drill shoes for a brand new pair of the Northland's favorite type of footwear—shoepacs.



One of the first places we hit was the Supply Department's "Ocean View Haberdashery," where we drew new water-shedding clothes.



FIRST CHOW on our island was the noon meal we ate a few hours after we hit the beach. This was our introduction to "K" rations. We scooped water from a nearby stream and made coffee in cream cans to help wash down the dry "dog biscuits" of concentrated food.




"K" RATION boxes outside our smoky field kitchen sort of symbolized our chow those first weeks. For several days "K" formed our full diet; then we had "K" with hot soup.

# Chow on the Beachhead

FEEDING A BUNCH of hungry, hard-working Bees on a beachhead is a job. Just ask any of our cooks or bakers. Our first meal on the island consisted of Army "K" rations. Our second meal consisted of Army "K" rations. Our third meal—well, it went on like that for days.

A novelty at first, this diet of concentrated energy, concocted by a scientist with a genius for condensation but an utter lack of good taste, got monotonous in a hurry. After eating "dog biscuits" for about so long, we began to bark at each other. And none of us ever will be able to look a dextrose or malted milk tablet in the face again.

The field kitchen stoves we brought with us had already seen active service in too many previous wars; they wouldn't work. So we had to improvise our own stoves, using empty fuel drums. The result was that one day our "K" rations were supplemented with what seemed then the world's most tasty delicacy—hot chili. A little later came that day of days—we had a full hot meal.



We improvised stoves out of empty fuel drums and at last we had our first full hot meal—with "K" rations on the side. When the wind wasn't blowing rain into that beachhead galley, it was blowing sand. But we needed a lot of grit to keep going those first weeks, anyhow



Officers' mess on the beach was a stand-up affair, with no refinements and little regard for the formalities of rank.



This weary looking Bee balanced his tray on a drum of diesel fuel while he scooped in enough chow to keep him going a few more hours.



High above the charging surf we drilled into a massive rock which was crowned by only a few feet of growing moss and grasses. We put in the dynamite and set it off. When the smoke cleared, the power shovels moved in and loaded the pieces into trucks.

# WE CARVE AWAY HILLS



We used rocks from our towering quarry to lay a foundation for our roads. Gradually, though, the rocks sank deeper and deeper.

The first piece of equipment to rumble ashore from an LCT was a bulldozer, and even before the laborious job of carrying off crates and boxes had begun the 'dozer was biting into the virgin tundra to start a road.

But the Aleutian tundra is no ordinary soil. Soggy and soft from the rains and fogs and wet snows of countless years, it presented the road-building problems of swampland. Scraping the surface served only to reveal more spongy soil beneath.

We had to build our roads with materials at hand, and no trees grow on these desolate islands so we could not build the usual corduroy type of swampland road.

We had to experiment. Near the sea we found a huge and towering rock, perhaps left there by a glacier of some forgotten ice age. We blasted this and tried it for a road base. The rock fragments merely sank into the tundra.

But we also found high hills of good sand, where in years past the sea once had been.

We blasted and scooped away the sand, and with this we "floated" our roads on the soft tundra.



SAND was the solution to the road-building problem. We carved away great hills like this one, shovelful by shovelful, truckload by truckload. Where the rock had sunk into the jelly-like tundra, the sand "floated" on top We packed it down and made a hard surface.

# TO BUILD OUR ROADS




BEFORE the sand was put on, heavy trucks mired hub deep in the mud. This is the way the tundra looked when the top layer was scraped off.



AFTER "floating" the sand and packing it down, we had hard surfaced, permanent roads, able to take a lot of punishment.



DRAINAGE of the roadway, to keep our floating roads from floating away, was as important as the sand "fill."

With dragline and hand shovels, we scarred the tundra with ditches alongside the roadways (above). We saw then how much water there really was in the soil. Through seepage alone the ditches became new streams, flowing with running water

To speed the island's natural drainage, with bulldozer and shovel (below) we even carved new courses for the streams which for years had been flowing in their meandering way through the tundra to the sea.

Road building was our introduction to the No. 1 problem of building anything on the tundra—drainage of the water-logged soil.

(In the road building scene above, a dragline, working ahead of the trucks, had already dug the main drainage ditches, one on each side. Trucks were dumping loads of sand as bulldozers levelled it off and packed it. Lights had been put in place for the night crew. All construction work went ahead full blast night and day.)



# WE BUILD OUR CAMP

WHATEVER we wanted on our island, we had to build ourselves. So it was with our homes.

We had the materials, of course—canvas, poles, stakes, floors. For our first temporary camp along the beach—when the chief concern was to get a place, any kind of place, to rest for a few hours out of the rain—we built tents of the most temporary kind. We hurriedly tossed four floor sections on the wet tundra, thrust the center pole through the tarpaulin and raised it, staked down the four corners and a couple of other places—and we had a tent.

But for our permanent camp we used a little more care, and a lot more labor.

We started our camp and had it almost finished before road-building had progressed to the campsite. That meant we had to use manpower to carry nearly all the materials over the mushy tundra. As we wore paths, the mud became deeper. Frequently we sank in to our knees with a load of two-by-fours on our backs.

For our permanent tents we put a few braces under the floor sections, built a four-foot sidewall, and equipped the tents with stoves. The stoves were cone-shaped affairs, plainly of World War I vintage, and at first had no bottoms. We made our own to use until the manufactured kind arrived several weeks later.

The stoves had a habit of burning either too hot or too cold. We had our most even heat of the winter when storms kept supply ships away and we ran out of coal. Some kind of oil burning device appeared mysteriously, usually at night, in almost every tent. Fortunately for the continued usefulness of our bulldozers and cranes, a coal supply was landed before we had used up quite all the diesel fuel.

Some tents acquired a close to home-like atmosphere, with bookshelves and writing desks hammered out of dynamite cases, bed lamps made of empty powdered-milk cans, and other dainty gadgets.

Our main concern was whether our homes would withstand the roaring williwaws. Sometimes the tent poles jitterbugged, the floors heaved and quivered, and the canvas flapped like the wash on Aunt Minnie's clothes line, but the tents didn't collapse. Even our most severe earthquake jiggled only three tents down.



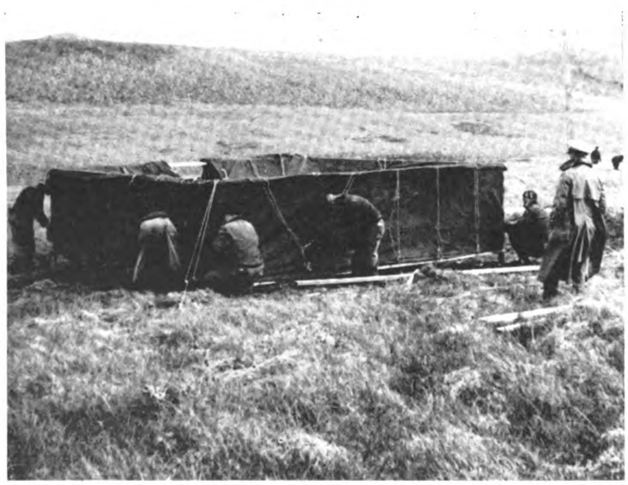
THE TUNDRA TIGER—as we called this swamp buggy or snow jeep—hauled some of the camp-building material from the beach to the site.



BUT MOST of the transporting was done this way through the mucky mud. A 12-hour day of labor like this was a work-out.



THE BOTTOMLESS tundra afforded nothing firm to support a foundation, but we did put in stakes and a few boards to brace the tent floors.



WE BUILT a two-by-four frame, four feet high, as sidewalls, before we put on the canvas. For a view of our finished camp in winter, turn the page.



WE MADE OUR OWN sewer pipes, welding empty fuel drums together, and even throwing a few fancy curves. We made our own septic tank, too.



WHERE smaller pipes would do the job, we made them of wood. Water seeped into the ditches as fast as we dug them.



THE HEAD rated a concrete floor—or deck, if you insist. Head, sick bay, administration building and recreation hall were quonset huts.



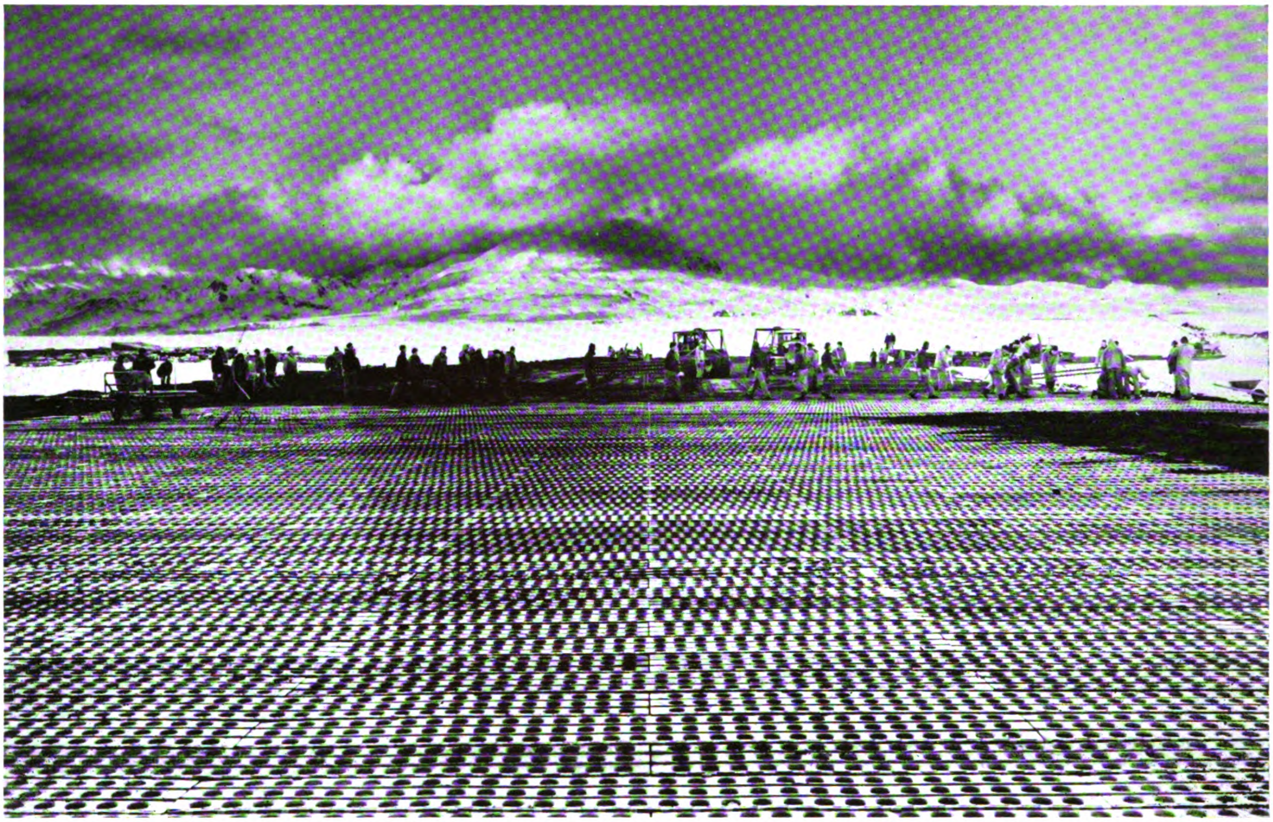

LUXURY AT LAST!—26 days after we hit the beach. We had to make welded fittings for the head; the originals were lost overboard in loading.





OUR TENT CITY "apartments" didn't have Sun Valley Lodge accommodations, but one way or another we found room in them to stow (after a fashion) our vast accumulation of gear. And that cot and sleeping bag were welcome indeed when, after a day's hard labor, we could peel off our sodden clothes and "hit the sack." When winter came, our camp in Asthma Hollow (below) presented a beautiful sight with its geometric pattern of dark tents in neat rows standing out in vivid contrast to the white world in which we lived.





# WE BUILD A MILE OF THE ROAD TO TOKYO

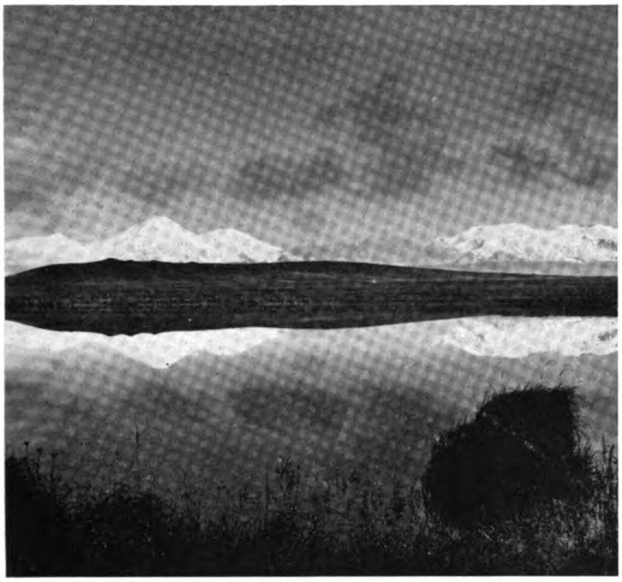
ROAD BUILDING, camp building and all the rest were only incidental to our main job—the job of constructing an important link in the northern road to victory, a mile of the super highway to Tokyo.

This was our reason, our only reason, for being on the island, for enduring the discomforts of rugged living and the bitterness of the vicious Aleutian weather.

On the next eight pages we tell the story of how we built that ribbon of sand and steel on the tundra, amid the wetness and snow and cold and winds.



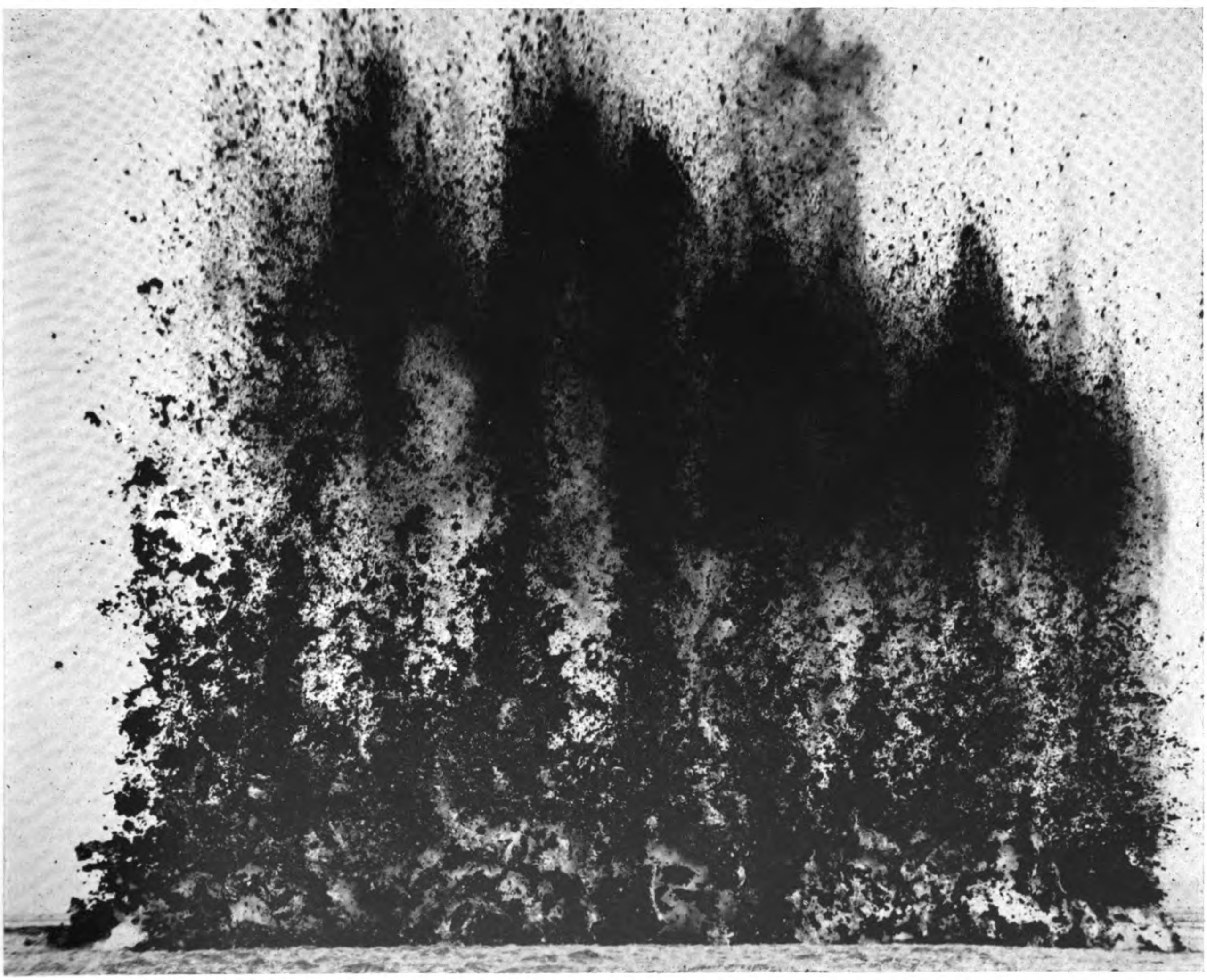
SURVEYORS, trudging knee deep through the mushy tundra, were busy on the runway site even before all our tents had been erected. Wading through this stuff for 10 or 12 hours a day developed a tough pair of legs, if they didn't wear out first! Well, the stakes were easy to drive, anyhow.



TUNDRA LAKES, formed in low places by seepage, may have been beautiful on the rare clear, still days, but they had to be drained.



WATER GUSHED from a tundra lake as the last section of a drainage ditch was blasted.



ONE MIGHTY blast dug a 200-foot section of a drainage ditch, hurling soggy chunks of tundra high into the air. Dynamiting the wet ground presented its own problems. We also dug ditches the hard way, as shown on following pages.



NOTHING LOOKS quite so helpless as a piece of heavy equipment bogged down in the water-logged tundra—and we saw plenty of it. This back hoe was trying to dig a drainage ditch on the runway site when it teetered off its heavy wooden platform and plunged into the mire. The tipped up driver's seat in the cab shows the operator didn't waste any time getting out when his rig went into its nose-dive. The saturated state of the tundra, revealed by this photo, graphically tells why a network of drainage ditches had to be dug before we could even start to pour on the sand "fill." We used back hoes and draglines to make the main ditches, but we dug the cross ditches by hand—and a lot of back-breaking hard labor.



A NETWORK of ditches gradually grew on the runway site. As we dug and dug we also levelled off hills that were in the way, hauling off the muggy dirt—or, if the hill contained sand, dumping it on portions of the strip where drainage already had begun.



HAND-DIGGING of ditches with a "Japanese dragline" or "idiot stick" wasn't very glamorous, but it was a vitally important part of the job.



WITH INSULT added to injury, we sometimes had to dig the same ditches twice—the second time to remove the snow a bitter storm had blown in.



MOST MISERABLE job of all was digging slush out of a muddy drainage ditch while a roaring williwaw whipped wet snow into our faces, down our necks and through our supposedly waterproof clothing. Rain and snow, riding on the wind, almost always "fell" horizontally.





IF ANY OF US had the slightest doubt that we were in the North Country, we had that doubt removed suddenly and with a vengeance when the water in the drainage ditches froze overnight into solid ice, hard as the rock of our quarry.

While the bitterly cold wind still swept across the tundra, we hacked at the ice with picks and dug it out with shovels. With draglines we scooped the snow and scraped the ice off the field, until great heaps of snow and piles of broken ice lined the runway on both sides.

We had to do this before the sand "fill" could be poured. It would settle some, anyhow, when the spring thaws came. We knew that.

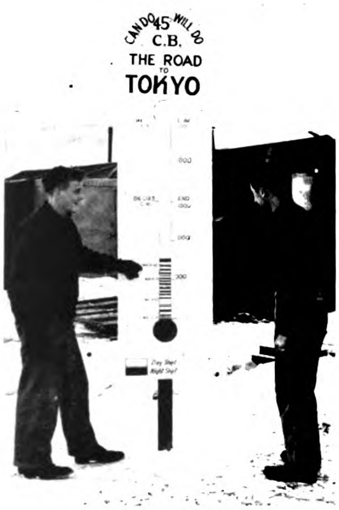
But we wanted our part of the Road to Tokyo to have as solid a foundation as we could build on the tundra, an unstable place to build at best.

Scenes on this page show us hacking away at the ice, digging it out and carting it in wheelbarrows to the edge of the strip.





THREE, FOUR, sometimes half a dozen or more trucks were dumping at the same time. Some of us served as traffic cops, to direct the drivers to the right spot. Some of us were "checkers," who kept track of the number of loads each driver hauled. Leading drivers were announced daily.







WE WATCHED our progress on these charts. Shifts as well as individuals competed with each other on the hauling job. Day and night hauling was marked in different colors.

# Sand

IT TOOK A LOT of it to float the runway. Hauling of the sand "fill" followed on the heels of the draining job. This was the truck drivers' hey-day, and we vied with each other to see who could haul and dump the greatest number of loads in a day or a night. Trucks roared along on our roads continuously. We took time out only to eat, and to service the trucks. We exhausted our first sand pit, then dug another, and another. And still the runway required more sand and still more.



THE TEXTURE of wet sand made a nice photo after it was pushed and levelled by bulldozers. Men in the background are already laying the runway mat. Often the three phases of building the runway were going on at the same time—digging drainage ditches, hauling sand and laying mat.



WE DIDN'T quite appreciate the beauty of this scene when we were out there in the cold, working. Some of us were digging ice and snow out of a drainage ditch while the bulldozer pushed snow to clear the way for more loads of sand and a dragline in the background had turned snow shovel.



THE SAND had to be smooth before we could lay the mats, so we rigged up this drag with a 40-foot steel beam. As with everything else there was plenty of hand-work, too, on this. With our faithful shovels we scattered the surplus sand which the improvised drag scraped off.









# Everybody Laid Mats

THE FINAL STEP of building the runway—laying the steel planks or mats—was a job for everybody. Out of the offices, the warehouses, the M.A.A. tent we came, and all of us pitched in with a vigor that surprised even ourselves. Officers, too, joined in the labor of toting steel. Night and day, mat after mat we carried, laid it down, linked it with the next one, and hammered in the locking clips. We finished the first section of our runway a week ahead of the fast schedule which had been set.




# We Lay the Last Mat— And the First Plane Lands

WITH ANTICIPATION we looked to the skies after that last mat was laid. Each time we heard the throb of a single patrol plane or the roar of a squadron, we expected a pilot to come down. Finally a lone plane circled our settlement again and again. Our siren screamed. We all ran to the runway, watched the plane come lower and lower, heard the whine of rubber as the wheels hit the metal mats. Then we gathered around as if we never had seen a plane before. We shook hands with the pilot and his photographer. We rejoiced—the result of all our labor was in use. Our runway "worked."





# SOME OF US KEEP 'EM ROLLING




FILL 'ER UP—Aleutian style. Our filling station was mobile; if the truck couldn't get to the station, the station went to the truck.

NO LESS IMPORTANT than the men who ran the trucks, the bulldozers and the rigs were those of us who serviced and repaired them to keep 'em rolling.

And that was a job. Our equipment was not all the best. Little of it was new. Almost all of it already showed the signs of rugged use. Our kind of work just naturally was hard on equipment. Tough pulls were murder to transmissions and differentials. The first rough roads broke springs. Our frequent need to plunge into the surf splashed damaging salt water into motors. From those first hectic days on the beachhead until we left our island, maintenance of equipment was a major problem, difficult to solve.

Replacement parts were almost impossible to get. When springs broke we welded them. When salt water got into motors we rebuilt them. When trucks got beyond repair we scrapped them, saving precious parts. To keep 'em rolling was a test of our ingenuity.



OUR FIRST "garage" on the beachhead was an open air affair. We just drove our trucks to the side of the beach road and yanked out a wrench.



THERE WAS always a line waiting at the beachhead machine shop, as old trucks gave way under the rugged use of our first days on the island.



LATER, we built a garage into which trucks could be driven for repair under cover. We used runway mats for the floor.



A PRECISION machine shop was built around the mobile shop on wheels. Here we did fine machining and frequently made our own tools.

# SOME OF US KEEP 'EM FLOATING




THE BOAT HOUSE, where repairs were made, was a busy place; usually with one boat undergoing repairs inside and another waiting outside.

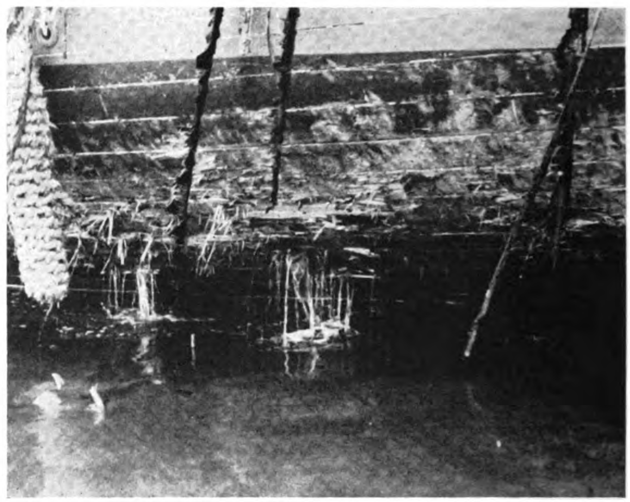
OUR WATERFRONT DEPARTMENT felt the fury of Aleutian weather and its results perhaps more than any of the rest of us. For the winds which sent rain and snow biting into our faces on land also whipped the sea into a frenzy which often wrecked our "fleet" and made unloading of supplies a hazardous job.

To keep our boats floating—J-boat, Higgins boat, pontoon barge and the others—was a vital job. Without our boats we couldn't unload ships, because we had no dock. If we couldn't unload ships we couldn't get food and fuel and other supplies. Until we had our runway far enough along so a plane could land, our only means of getting things from the outside world was from ships riding at anchor miles offshore.

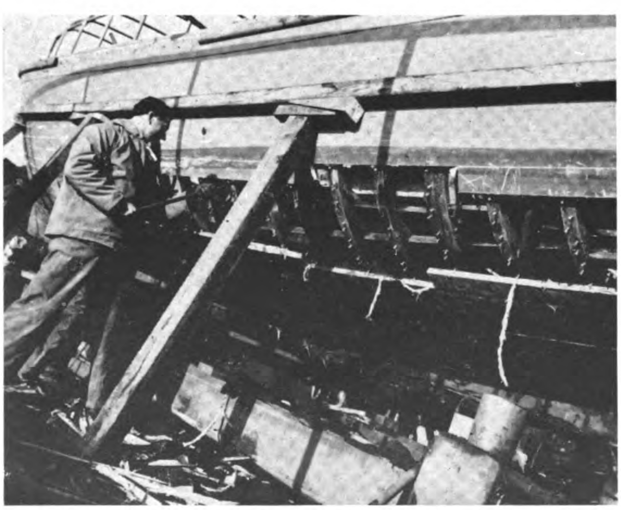
We on the waterfront became the most salty of mariners—and boat-builders, too. When a storm pulled a boat from its mooring and dashed it against the rocks, there was only one thing to do—repair it.



A DERELICT on the debris-strewn beach, this J-boat had been washed ashore during a storm the night before this photo was made.



CLOSE-UP examination of the hull revealed water streaming from the seams and holes battered from stem to stern by jagged rocks and reefs.



WE HAD TO TEAR all the planking off and practically build a new boat around the old one's skeleton. Some of us had built boats at home.



AFTER our repairs, the J-boat was better than when it had been assigned to our island—and it had a brand new sign, showing it was ours.



Before the Higgins boat was ours, it belonged to a supply ship. Tied alongside, it broke loose one stormy night and washed onto the rocks.




After we repaired it, it was ours—and one of the most valuable members of our "fleet." We used it for rescue work as well as for cargo.



During the repairing process, we rebuilt the Higgins boat, baring its ribs and giving it new plywood sides. We built a new bottom, and slicked the boat up with a fresh coat of paint and our own name. The boathouse was just large enough to hold the craft we rebuilt in it.

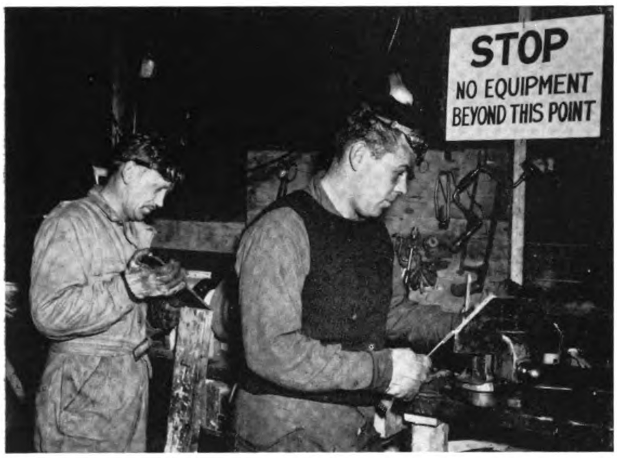
# SOME OF US KEEP 'EM ALL GOING

When the latch stuck on the head door, when a bench in the mess hall broke a leg, when a grate in a tent stove burned out, when a williwaw rubbed the insulation off a live wire . . . when any of these things or a hundred others happened, there was one simple solution to them all—just "call Maintenance."

We in Maintenance were plumbers, electricians, cabinet makers, carpenters, painters, and general handy men. We did all the big and little things necessary to keep our camp on the tundra in good condition.



Putting snowshoes on a "cat" was just one of the more unusual jobs we were called upon to perform. Wooden cleats added to traction surface.




Grinding and welding were a couple of the more frequent jobs we in the "fix-it" department handled in our stride.



Need a motor rewound, a generator repaired, or a tent rewired? Our electrical hot-shots could grapple with any high or low voltage task.



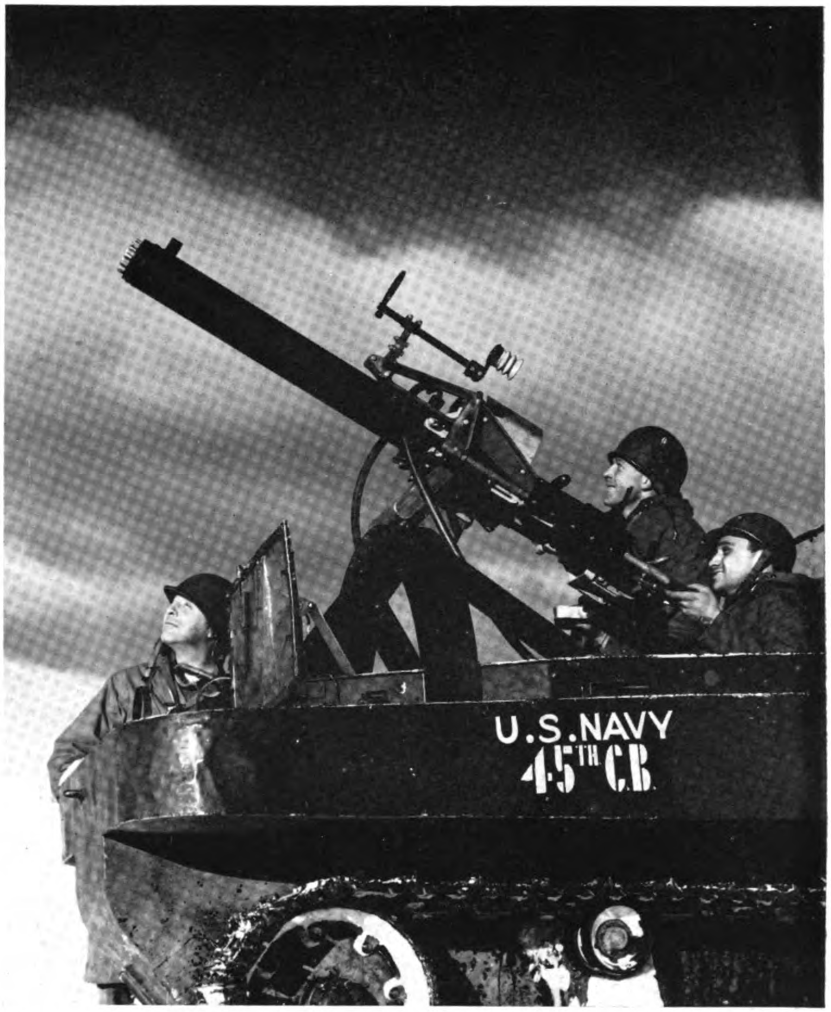
If it was made of wood, we could make it here—cabinets, lockers, shelves, files, or almost anything. To us hammer and saw men also came the requests to put new hinges on this door, to add a latch to that cabinet, and even to keep our catwalk in repair

# WE PREPARE TO FIGHT THE JAPS

NOT FOR A MOMENT did we forget that we were alone on our island, and that the enemy had every good reason for trying to stop us from building our part of the Road to Tokyo. We put in and manned gun emplacements at various vantage points. We established outposts and a security watch. We were prepared to defend what we were building.



WE MOVED INTO an old Aleut barabara. Well camouflaged, it made an ideal outpost for us.




FOR A MOBILE defense unit, we built a gun mount on a snow jeep, and put a death-spitting machine gun on it. With this we could get to any threatened point in a hurry.



AS SOON as we landed, we assembled machine guns in readiness for defense of our beachhead.



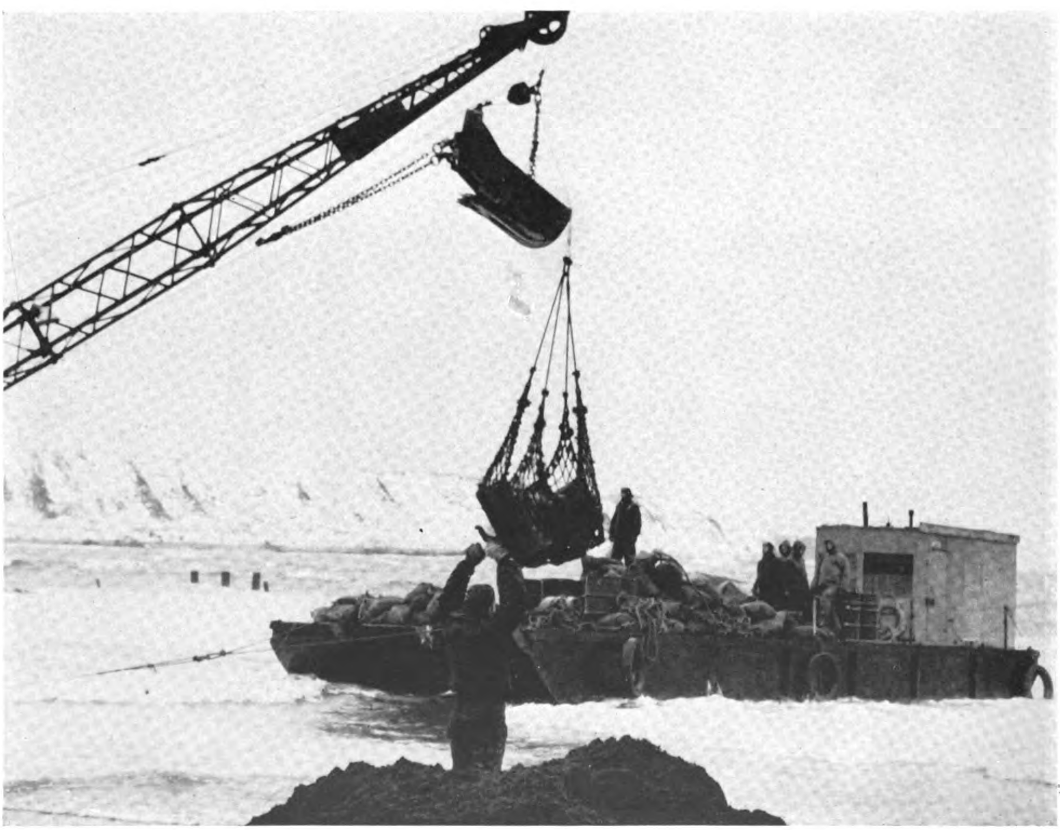
WE BUILT sand-bagged permanent gun emplacements, and some of us were selected as gun crews, ready to drop our tools and rush for a gun at a moment's notice.



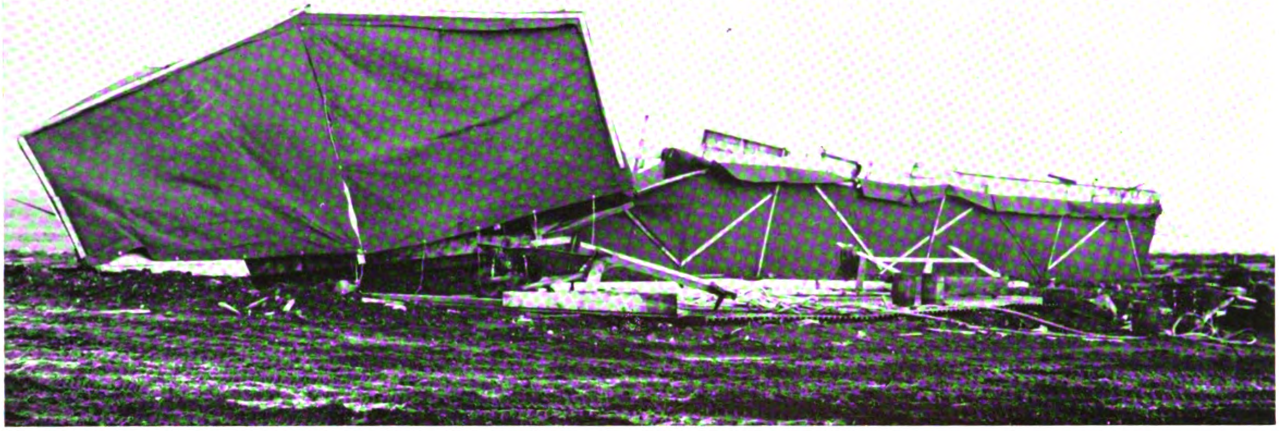
THE BATTLE of the weather was most dramatic on the sea, where winds piled water into monster waves, and sent powerful breakers crashing against our beach as if they would wash our very island away. Our waterfront became frothy with white foam and littered with wreckage.

# WE FIGHT THE WEATHER

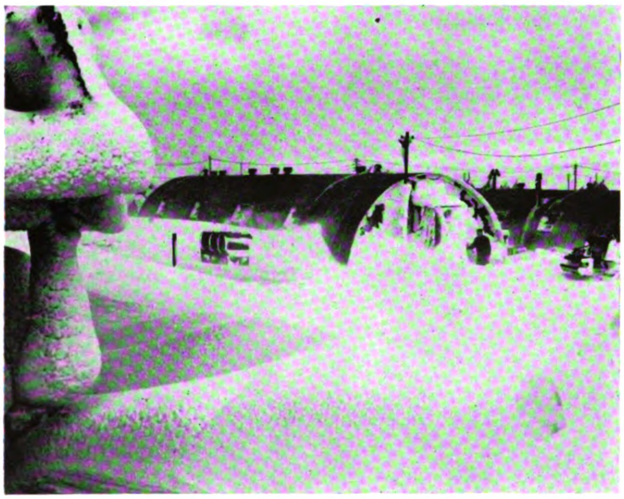
THE ALEUTIANS, stretching southwestward from the Alaska Peninsula like a giant boom, divide the frigid Bering Sea from the warmer current which sweeps up through the North Pacific from the Japanese coast. The two seas are in eternal conflict, and make of the Aleutian Islands and the waters around them a weather battle area. This was the weather we lived and worked in; this was the weather we fought—fog and rain and snow and roaring williwaws that made life miserable on our insecure perch of land and made our waterfront a place of danger.



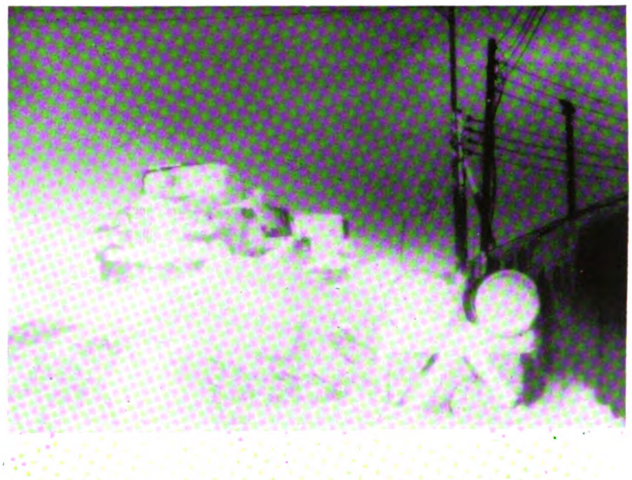
WE RISKED our necks to get supplies to shore when the sea was rough. The worse the water, the farther offshore the supply ships anchored, and the more hazardous was each trip on the pontoon barge. We brought in this load of coal and oil at the height of a raging storm.



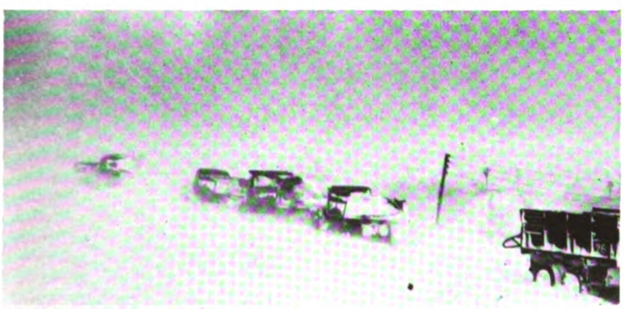
A WILLIWAW one night picked up our machine shop and set it down again. The section at the right was turned upside down in the process. Later we stacked one-ton bundles of runway metal to protect the building. We recorded winds of nearly 100 miles an hour on our island.



DEEP DRIFTS of snow piled up in our camp area, and nearly covered some of the buildings. Usually it was wet snow, driven by a high wind.



ALEUTIAN WINTER is typified by this photo, with wind-whipped snow filling the air, with trucks stalled, and the corner of a building dripping frigidity.



WE HAD TO STOP work this day, when the swirling snow blocked roads and cut down visibility so much that even our camp was obscured.



STRUGGLING HARD to peer around the clouds after a storm, the sun created a bit of beauty rare to the Aleutian skies.



RESCUERS WERE RESCUED. The Higgins boat engine died as we were taking men off the grounded ship, and our anchor wouldn't hold in the heavy seas. As we started to drift toward the rocks ourselves, the crew of another ship, from which one of our photographers took this picture, heaved a line to hold us until we got the engine popping again. A few minutes later the ship which had thus rescued us went aground herself on a hidden reef. A lucky swell lifted her off again, or we would have had two crews to rescue at once. Our waterfront was never dull!

# WE RESCUE MEN AND SHIPS FROM THE STORMY SEA

GRIM AND STORMY was the ocean surrounding our island. The last link in our supply line, the unloading of ships on our unsheltered beach, was the most hazardous section of the line.

Two ships went aground on our "front porch" during our stay on the island. Others left our shores just in time. At least one other met its death on the way "home." Our waterfront was no picnic beach.

Trouble on the waterfront gave us an opportunity to show what kind of men we were. We faced the dangers, often at the risk of our own lives, and we did the job. We saved human lives. We saved vital cargo worth thousands of dollars. For this we won commendations. (See pages 160-163.) For this also three of us were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. (See page 100.)

We did not ask for or expect any particular reward for saving men or ships or goods from the stormy sea any more than we did for enduring the other hazards of our job on the island. It was merely part of that job—and so we did it without hesitation, accepting the dangers as they came.

On these two pages are pictures made when we rescued 49 men from a vessel grounded in our bay.

During a storm early one winter morning, the ship, which had come to our island with supplies, dragged anchor—and before she could be brought under control, heavy seas washed her onto a reef 1,100 feet from shore. Listing heavily and taking a terrific pounding from the high waves, she was in imminent danger of breaking in two.

In a small home-made skiff, some of us took a line out to the ship, through dangerous breakers, and we rigged up a breeches buoy. We pulled 23 men to shore and safety that way the first day. The next day we rescued one by the buoy and the remaining 25 men by going alongside the grounded ship in a Higgins boat, in mountainous seas. At one time (photo above) we nearly went aground ourselves in the Higgins.



As the men clung to the cargo net, suspended on a high line, we pulled them ashore. We rescued 24 men on this improvised "breeches buoy."



We heaved mightily on the line. We were saving human lives, and we didn't spare ourselves. The weather was dirty—wet, cold and windy.



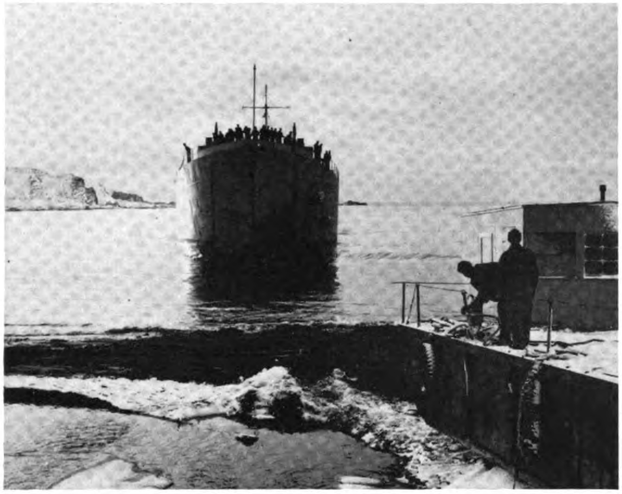
Safe ashore, the rescued seamen climbed off the cargo net. Once the highline broke when the men were midway. We plunged in to save them.



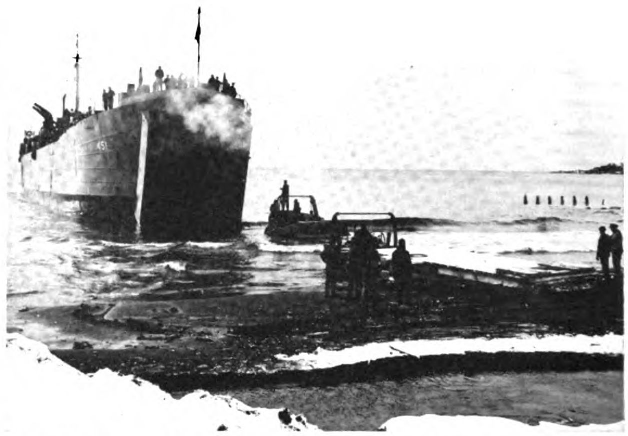
Blankets wrapped around them, the men were given first aid treatment on the beach, then taken to our Rec Hall, turned into a Sick Bay.



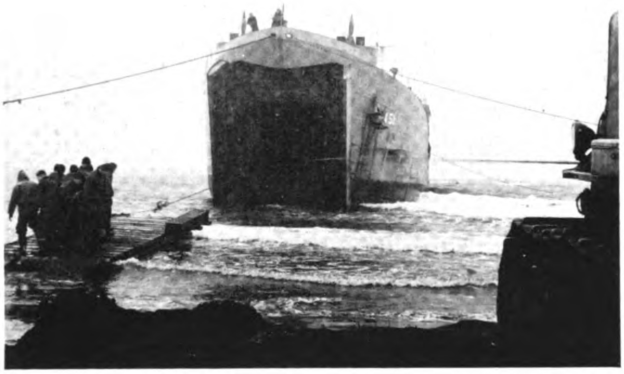
High seas crashed against the grounded ship as we carried on the rescue work in bitter Aleutian weather. Rain, sleet, snow and a high wind made the job tougher—and more important. About 1,100 feet of rock-strewn water, lashed to white fury by the storm, separated the ship from shore.



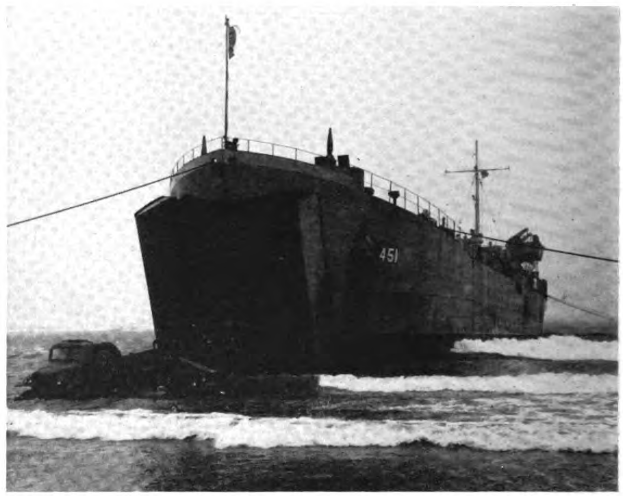
HARDLY A RIPPLE was on the sea when the LST nosed her prow into our beach. Rare Aleutian sunshine even reflected from her starboard side.




WHEN WE DROVE a 'dozer through the surf to get a mooring cable, the air still was quiet. The Union Jack hung limp on the jackstaff.



BUT JUST a short while later, when this supplemental ramp was pulled out, a storm had struck. Snow was flying. Union Jack stood straight out.




WE UNLOADED CARGO through the churning surf as long as the giant doors could be kept open. We took off 200 of the 1,000 tons of cargo this way.

# Sudden Aleutian Storm Grounds Supply Ship—and Makes a Rescue Job for Us

WE NEEDED MORE trucks and carry-alls, and a lot of other things, so an LST was loaded with a thousand tons of cargo and sent to us.

A bright sky and a smooth sea greeted her when she nosed her prow into our beach. But before the first piece of equipment could be rolled out of her yawning hold, a fierce Aleutian storm struck. We began the unloading job, anyhow, and managed to take about 200 tons off before the storm rose to such fury that the LST had to swing her giant doors shut.

All that night the storm raged, and the next morning the ship pulled loose from her mooring cables and drifted helplessly. She swung broadside to the breakers and was thrown fast aground.

We went into action in a hurry to salvage the remaining 800 tons of cargo, and if need be, to rescue the crew. We rigged a cable from ship to shore, and unloaded the cargo in breeches buoy manner, working through roaring gales and snowstorms.

After we saved the cargo, we set about saving the ship. Making temporary repairs, we helped get her off the beach and on her way.

Words of praise we received for this job are among the commendations on pages 160 to 163.

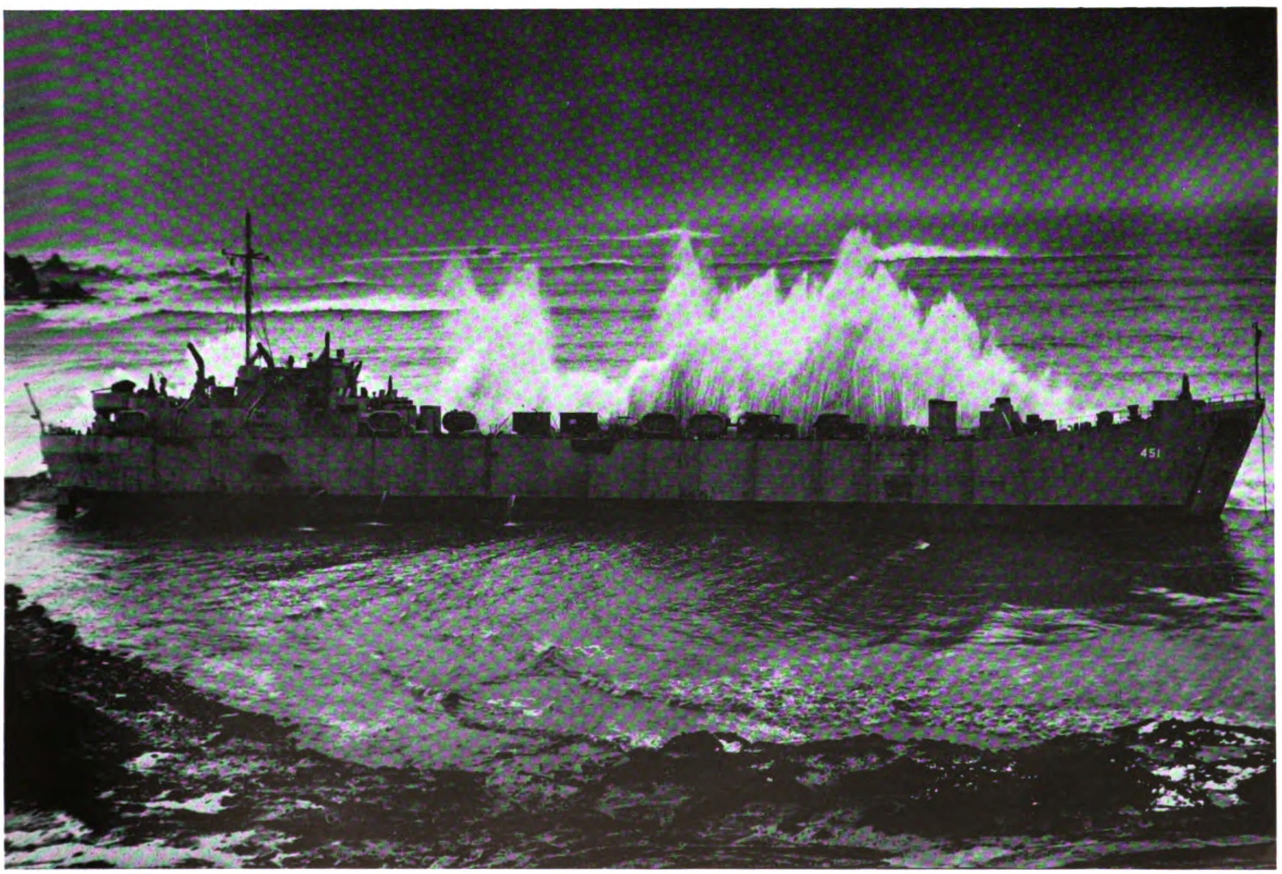




NEXT MORNING, the LST broke her mooring cables, and she drifted broadside to the beach, with terrific waves like this pounding her.



SHE WENT AGROUND, with her rudder above water, and her stern taking a beating from the charging sea, as the storm continued to rage.





WAVES HIT her broadside, sending a solid wall of water high as the LST's mast. This photo and others, as well as an account of our salvage work, were published in newspapers throughout the Old Country. We helped to build up the Seabees' reputation for doing a tough job well.

# WE RESCUE MEN AND SHIPS (Continued)



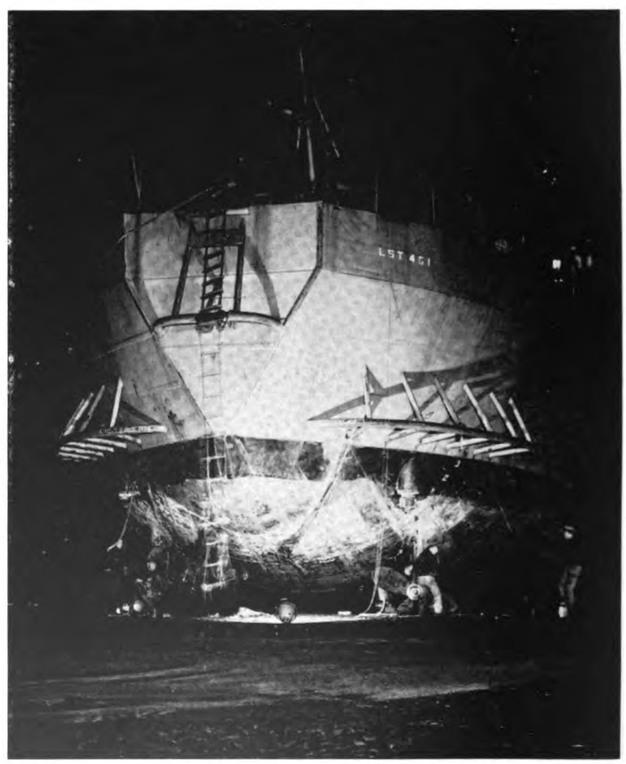
IN A HURRY, we rigged up a cable and began to salvage the LST's cargo as soon as she went aground. We took off more than 800 tons this way—and at low tide with a motorized crane in the surf—in less time than it took to load the ship. We worked under the worst weather conditions.



WITH THE SHIP'S elevator out of commission, we heaved cargo from the hold the hard way, by hand.



WE BUILT these emergency oil tanks of plywood, and with them salvaged 40,000 gallons of fuel oil which otherwise would have been poured into the ocean to lighten the load of the grounded ship.




WITH THE cargo removed, we made repairs, and worked at the slow and tedious job of refloating the ship. This night photo was made at low tide, when we were working on the stern of the LST.



EMERGENCY TREATMENT during those first rugged days on the island took place in a tent. We set up bunks for the more seriously ill.

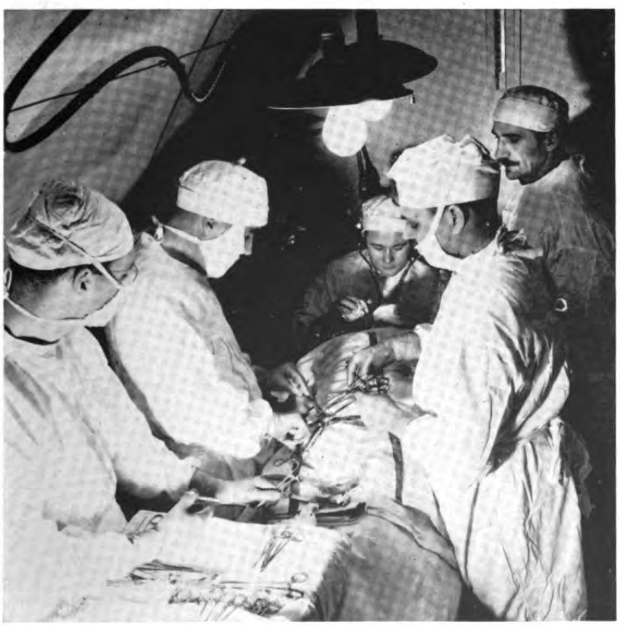


LATER ON, in our quonset Sick Bay, we had a spick and span ward where ill and injured received rest and treatment.

# WE CARE FOR THE ILL AND INJURED

ALONE ON OUR ISLAND, we knew we must be prepared to take care of our own ill and injured—and we were. The first temporary tent on the island to have a stove was the Sick Bay tent. Our doctors and hospital corpsmen were kept busy those first days preventing colds and curing those acquired in the dampness and the long hours of labor.

In our permanent camp, Sick Bay was a quonset hut, adequately staffed and stocked to take care of us when we were ill and when we were injured on the job. We took care also of the men we rescued from the stormy sea. And we were ready to treat any who might be wounded by enemy action.



THE OPERATING ROOM was ready at all times for anything. We could not depend on transportation to send patients to a large base hospital.



TOOTHACHES received prompt treatment, whether it meant pulling or filling. Our dentist, however, urged filling before it ached.




MOST POPULAR of men in the camp were the mail men—when they had mail to deliver. But when weeks went by without a ship landing, we blamed the mail men for the lack of letters.

# MAIL IS MORALE

LETTERS FROM HOME were our best morale boosters, and they usually came in bunches.

Until we had our section of the Road to Tokyo ready for use, all our mail made the last lap of its journey by ship. The uncertainties of weather meant that we received mail once a week—some weeks. Some of the more lucky among us received 50 or 60 letters at a time, when a ship finally was able to make it to our shores.

Arrival of mail caused a frantic scurry of writing letters, in an attempt to get answers started toward home on the same ship. Censors worked overtime then, and the waterfront crew frequently made a special trip to an anchored supply ship to get "just one more" mail bag aboard before it left.

Later on, some of our mail arrived and left by plane. That gave us better service, but we sort of missed receiving our morale in wholesale lots.




OUR CENSORS had the thankless task of making sure we didn't write things in our letters that might aid the enemy if he, instead of the folks back home, should happen to get his hands on our mail. The job of censor required good judgment and a silent tongue—as well as scissors.

# —AND SO IS CHRISTMAS

WE CELEBRATED Christmas by taking a day off —the first time since we hit the island three months before that work stopped for a full 24 hours.

Perhaps our thoughts turned toward home more at Christmas time than at any other time, but we did our best to make our Christmas on the tundra as merry as we could. In a treeless country, we built our own Christmas tree from scrap materials. We threw a party. We had some beer. We had super chow.

We had packages from home, too, a lot of them. For weeks before the day we were receiving cookies and fruit cakes and candy.

And we did not forget the real purpose of the Christmas observance. We had special church services Christmas Eve, and on the Sunday which followed.

Yes, Christmas was one of the bright spots of our life on our lonely island. We were resolved more than ever to make the dream of "peace on earth" come true.



CHRISTMAS just wouldn't be Christmas without a tree! We were on a treeless island, so we went Joyce Kilmer one better and made our own—broomstraws for needles, scrap wire for branches.



THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS—the hope of the world for lasting peace and good-will of men toward each other—was brought to us in special services on Christmas Eve. Our home-made Christmas tree looked real in the corner of the Recreation Hall.



WE PACKED the Rec Hall twice for a two-session Christmas party. We sang the familiar old Christmas carols and hymns, and then saw ourselves in the movies—a film made of our landing and work on the island, specially edited for showing to us on Christmas day.

# We Have a Party and Christmas Chow

ON CHRISTMAS EVE each of us received a couple of bottles of beer. We had that night and all the next day off, so most of us had a Christmas present of an extra long sleep.

Not so with the cooks, bakers and mess cooks, though. They were up early, preparing a turkey feed for the rest of us. The mess hall was decked out with white tablecloths—a rare sight for us in the wilderness.

In the afternoon we saw for the first time a movie of our landing and occupation of the island, the feature of our Christmas party.




ON OUR WAY out of the Rec Hall after the party, we received gifts from the Red Cross and our Welfare Department. *Below*—the Christmas mess hall.





# WE BUILD A PIER

SO THAT THOSE who occupied our island after we left would not have the same problems of unloading supply ships we had met, we built a sturdy pier after we finished our main job of constructing the runway.

This, too, we had to do the hard way. All the timber was brought in by ships and unloaded as we had unloaded every thing else we got to our island.

We had no pile driver, so we made one with a giant crane.

We knew what pounding a pier on that island would have to take from storms and sea, so we built it strong—driving the piling down and down, and bracing with stout timber.

When we were through, we knew we had strengthened the weakest link in the island's supply line. We had done more than had been expected of us.



JUTTING OUT into the bay near the spot where we had landed on the beach months before, the pier eliminated many of the waterfront hazards



STOUT PILES, strongly braced, provided firm support for the pier, the last construction job we performed on the island



WIDE ENOUGH for two trucks to pass, the pier would speed the unloading of ships. A comparatively small number of us constructed this; most of us already had been taken off the island. Building the pier was on a 24-hour-a-day schedule.



# WE LEAVE OUR ISLAND

MOST OF US LEFT the island before the pier was started. Some of us got off the easy way—by plane. The rest just reversed the process by which we had originally landed. Instead of going from ship to barge to shore, we started with the barge and wound up on the ship. We boarded the barge by clinging to the outside of a cargo net, swung by a crane boom.

We had no regrets at leaving the place which had been our home for so many months. Frankly, we were glad to get away! But we carried with us memories which we shall have always, and the satisfaction of knowing that we had done a tough job and had done it well. We could rightly feel that because of us the Road to Tokyo—and to victory—was stronger.





# WE GET TOGETHER AGAIN

REUNION of most of the battalion took place at an Aleutian base where some of us had been doing a man-sized job of building for months. To celebrate the occasion we treated ourselves to a special show in a large theater we ourselves had built.

Our own band (above) provided the main feature of the entertainment. Those big smiles we wore (below) resulted from our skipper's announcement that we soon would be heading home—this time for sure (almost).

Getting together with our old friends reminded us that though there had been friendly rivalry between detachments while we were apart, we were all part of the one battalion, a united outfit, and a good one.





*"For extraordinary heroism . . .*



*". . . I am pleased to present . . .*



*". . . this Navy and Marine Corps Medal."*



James A. Clifton, CBM; Paul R. Grace, CCM; James J. Donohue, SF1c

# WE HONOR OUR HEROES

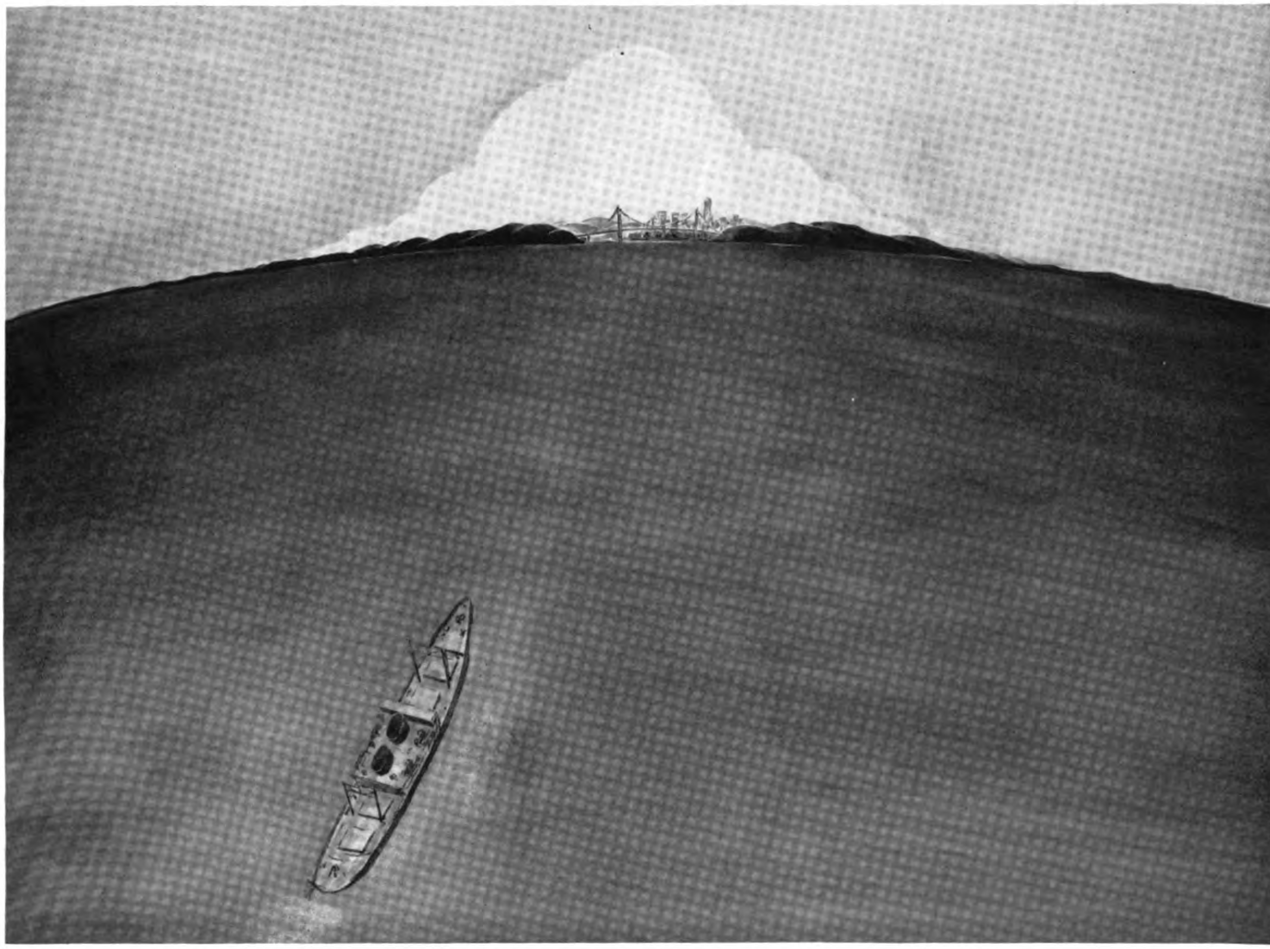
THREE OF US were awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal and citations for extraordinary heroism during the rescue of men from a grounded vessel. (See pages 88 and 89.) We honored our heroes with a public presentation ceremony, concluding it by passing in review before them.

Paul R. Grace, CCM, James A. Clifton, CBM, and James J. Donohue, SF1c, justly deserved their awards.

While men were being brought from the grounded ship to the shore by means of a breeches buoy, the high line broke, throwing the men into the icy sea and injuring one of them. Without hesitation and without orders, Grace, Clifton and Donohue launched a small, home-made skiff in the stormy, rock-strewn waters, and at great personal danger to themselves, they rescued the injured man. At the time they were dressed in heavy working clothes and boots, and did not have life preservers.

Complete copies of the citation and attendant commendation are included with others on pages 160-163.





# WE HEAD FOR HOME

After months of listening to and spreading false scuttlebutt —"straight from the head"—that our transport, the one which would return us to the Old Country, was in the harbor, we saw at last the day when it was true. We discarded the fur-lined coats and rainproof parkas of the Northland, and climbed aboard a ship—heading toward home after 16 months in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

Like nearly all servicemen who have been stationed on that chain of islands beset by fog and rain and snow and cold, we hated the Aleutians. We hated the treelessness, the eternal dampness, the utter lack of civilization.

But as we saw the last fog-bound island begin to slip silently over the horizon, it was not hate that filled our hearts. Rather, we heaved a sigh as if to say, "Well, that's over!"—and our thoughts turned to that haven still miles ahead . . . the Golden Gate and HOME!

Our loved ones, families, friends, bright lights, train whistles, the corner drugstore, the American way of life. Thoughts of all these surged up within us, some definite and tangible, some vague and emotional, unexplainable.

We realized then as we never had before that all the hardships and discomforts we had endured, all the lonesome months away from home, had been immeasurably worthwhile —because the things we had been defending are infinitely worthwhile.

When we had come North 16 months before, the war was at a stage where we might still have lost it. Now our forces were going forward in a mighty march to victory. We could take some satisfaction in knowing that by helping to build America's might in the North Country we had in some measure helped to make that victory march possible.

Our thoughts turned back to that day—it seemed so long ago, and yet at the same time only a little while ago—when we first saw Alaska's icy, snow-covered shores. We smiled, now, at how "green" we were then. What tenderfeet! What *Chechakhos!*

The North Country is a hard teacher, but we had learned much. Perhaps, we thought as we stood by the rail, we might want to see the real Alaska, the interior, some day after the war. We had heard a lot of good things about it.

Of one thing we were sure. If we did come North again, we could take care of ourselves. We knew the ways of the Northland now. We would get along.

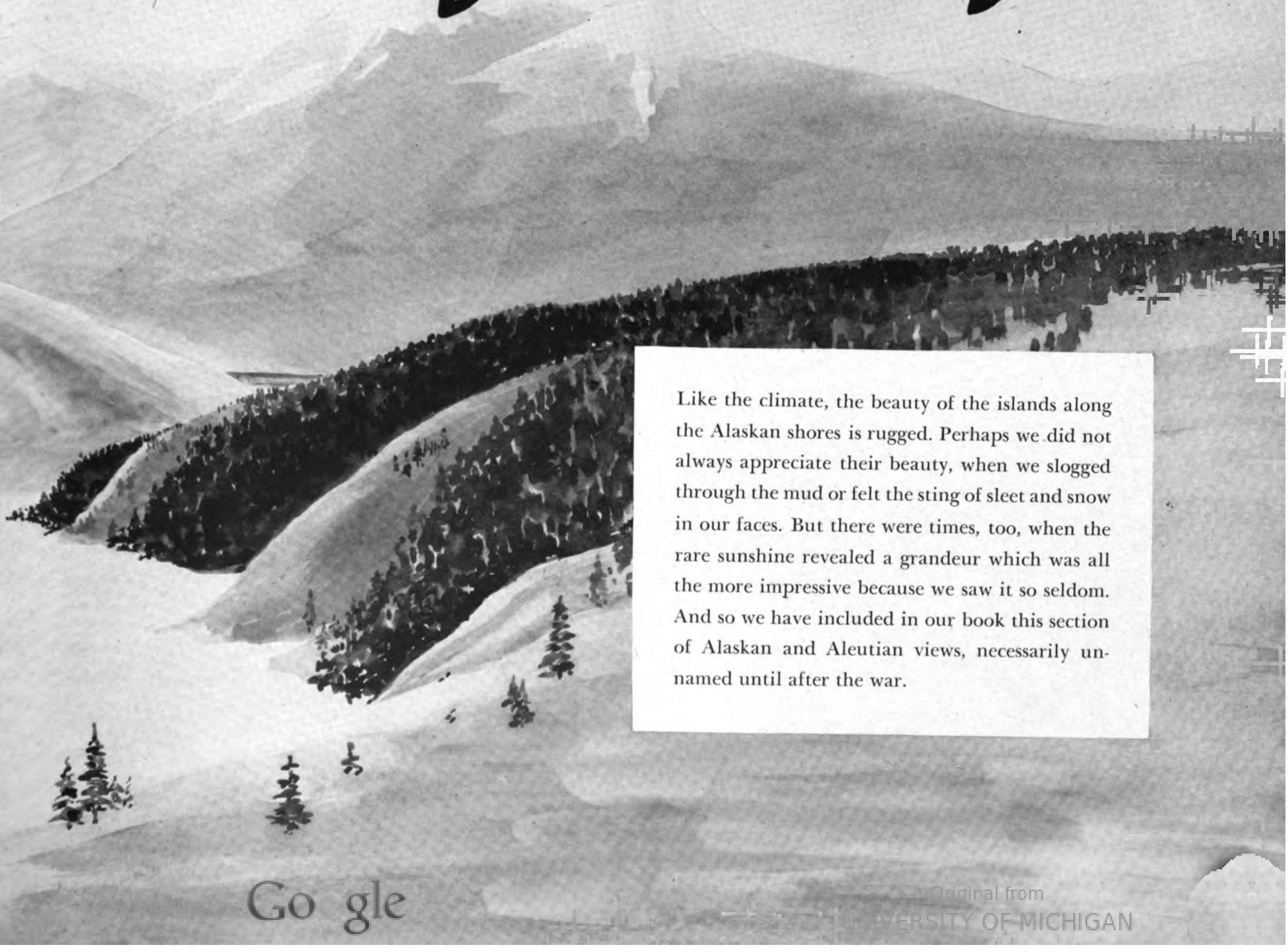
One last snow-capped, smoking peak still jutted above the horizon. We watched it disappear in silence, then noticed clouds gathering in the sky, and a few white-caps cropping out on the sea.

"It looks," we casually remarked, "like a little blow to-night."

And we laughed—loud and fearlessly into the teeth of the brewing storm.

We were, now, *Sourdoughs* indeed!

# SCENES
## *along the way*



Like the climate, the beauty of the islands along the Alaskan shores is rugged. Perhaps we did not always appreciate their beauty, when we slogged through the mud or felt the sting of sleet and snow in our faces. But there were times, too, when the rare sunshine revealed a grandeur which was all the more impressive because we saw it so seldom. And so we have included in our book this section of Alaskan and Aleutian views, necessarily unnamed until after the war.









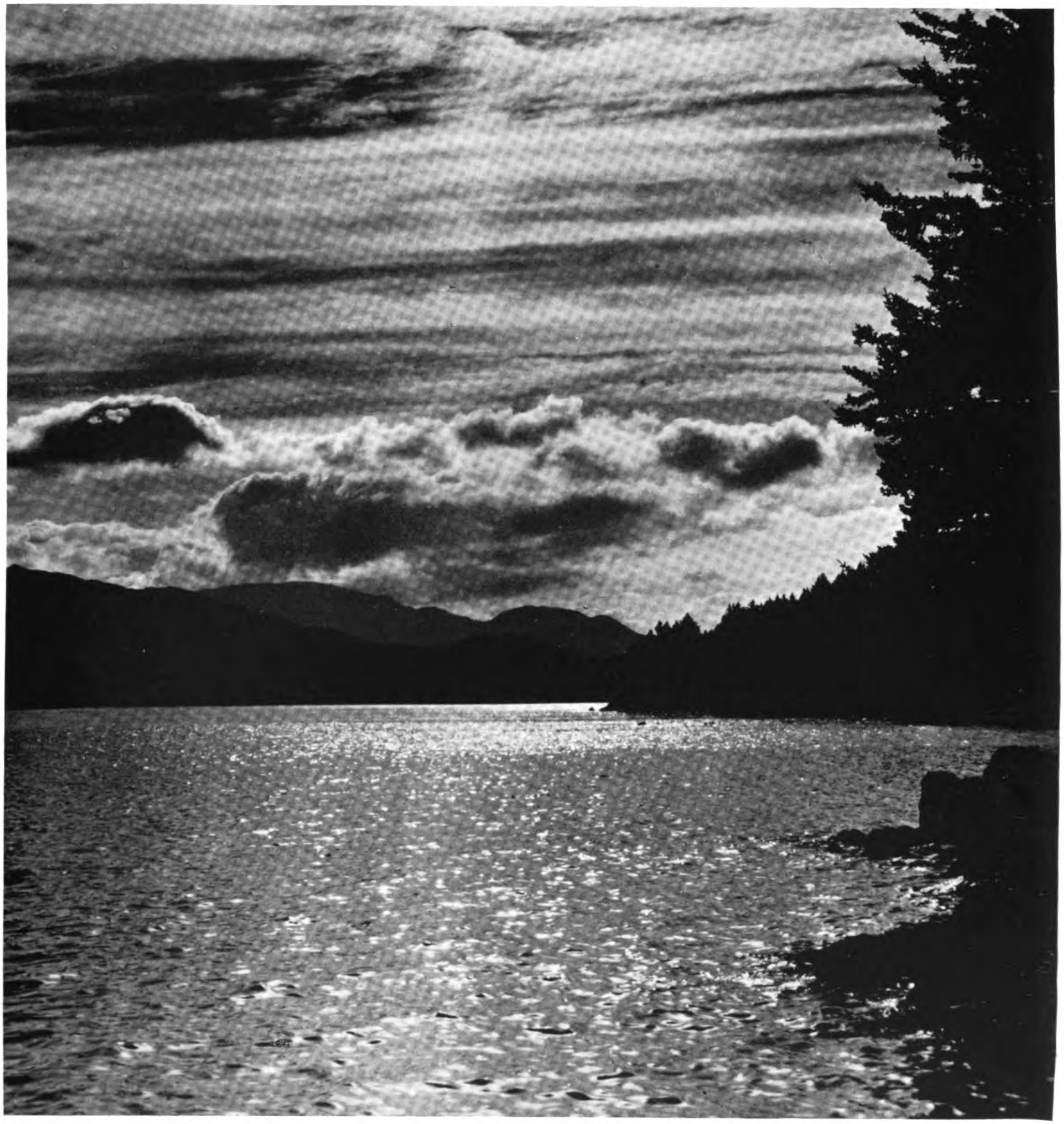












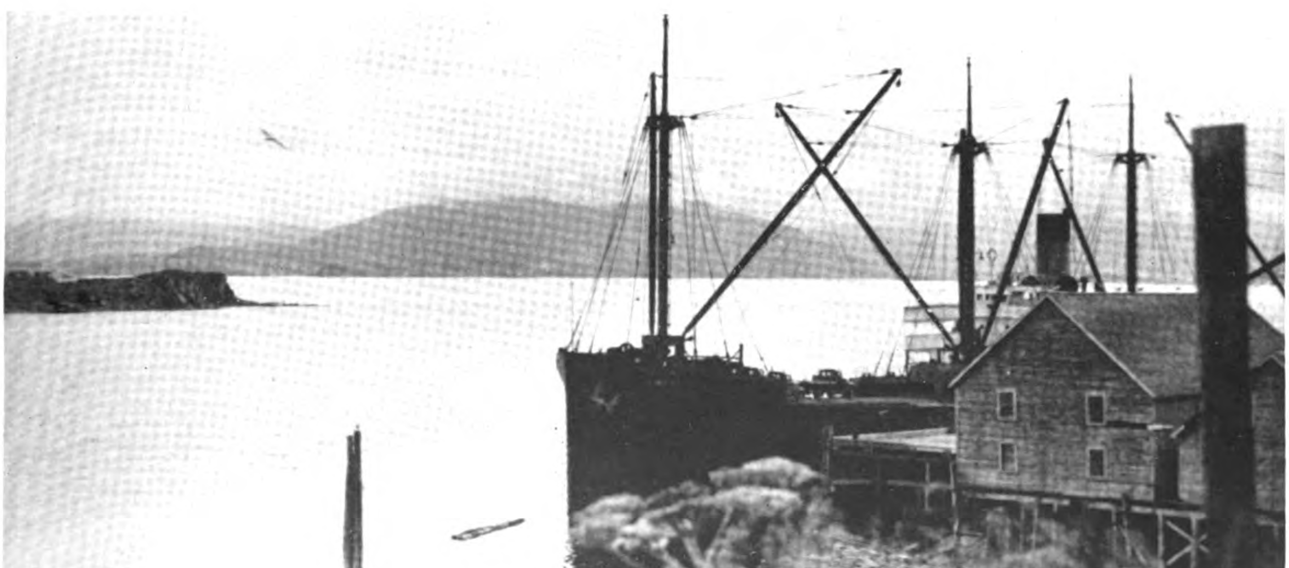
















45th SEABEES







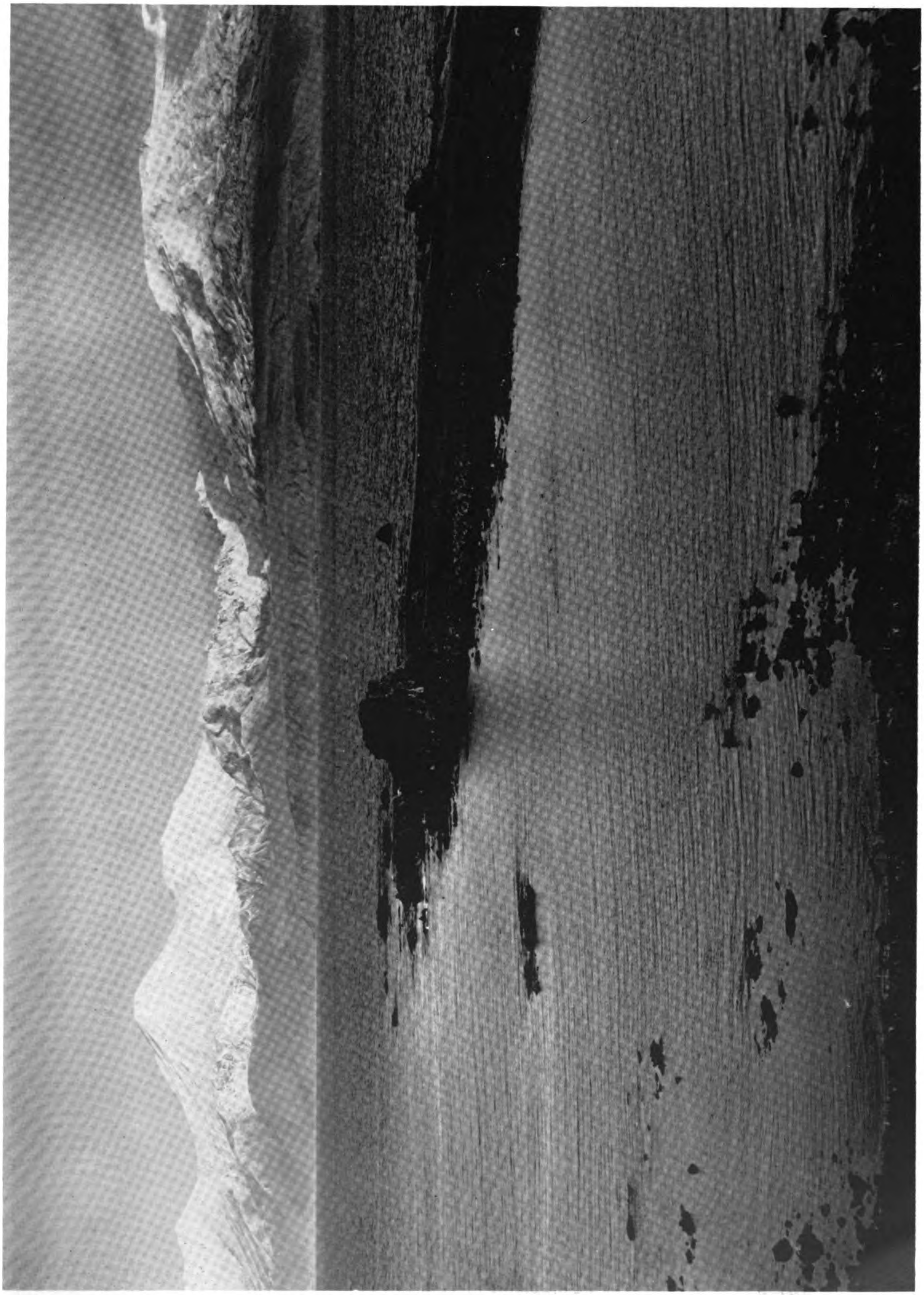








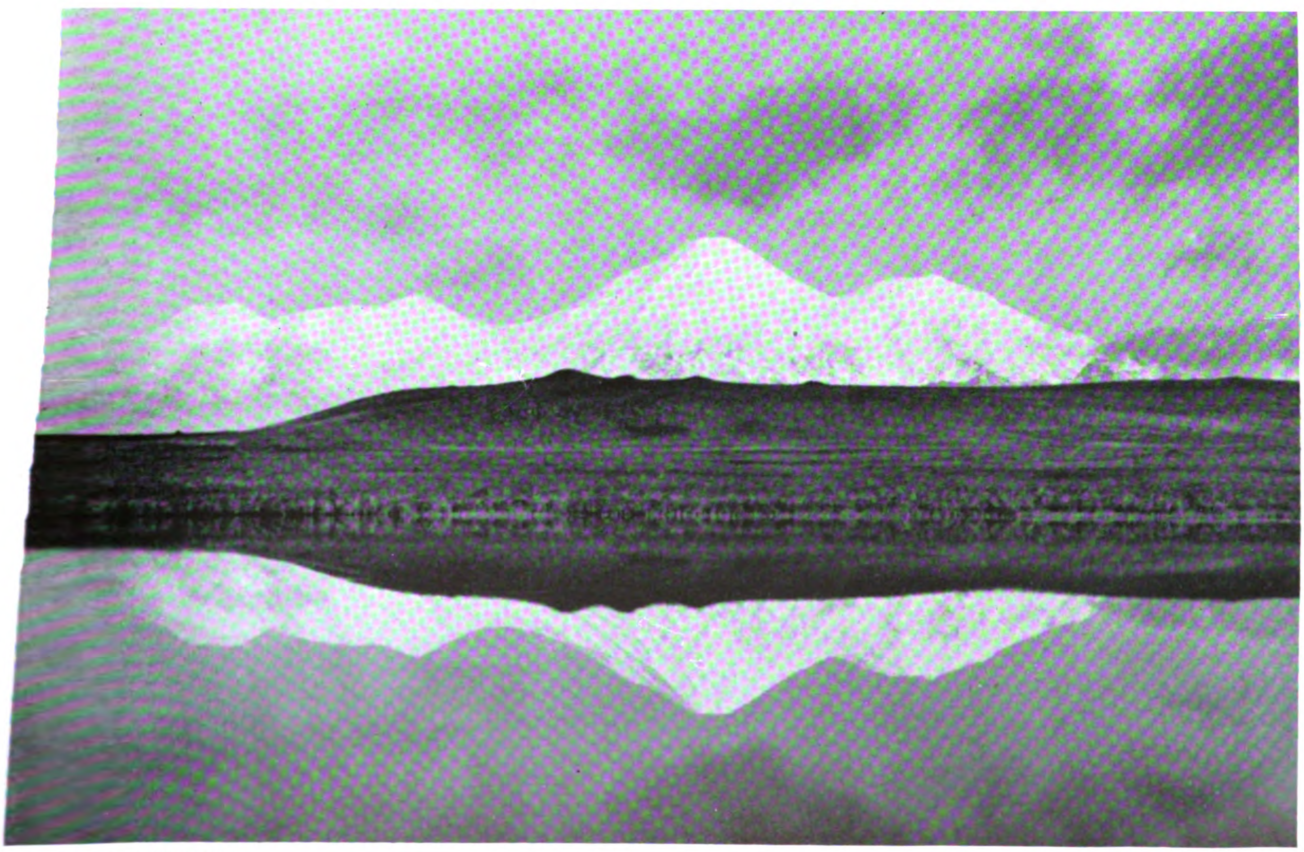
45th SEABEES








THE 45TH. SEABEES WILL-DO!
Here's Our PROGRESS Let's push it!

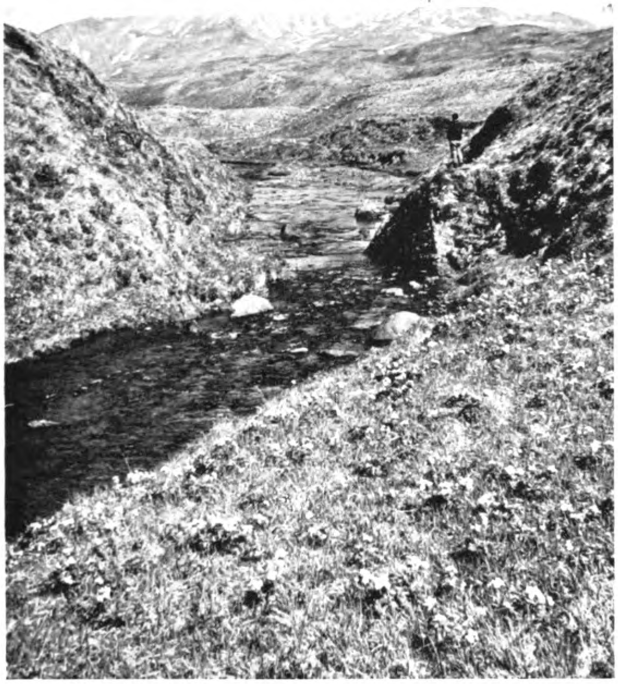


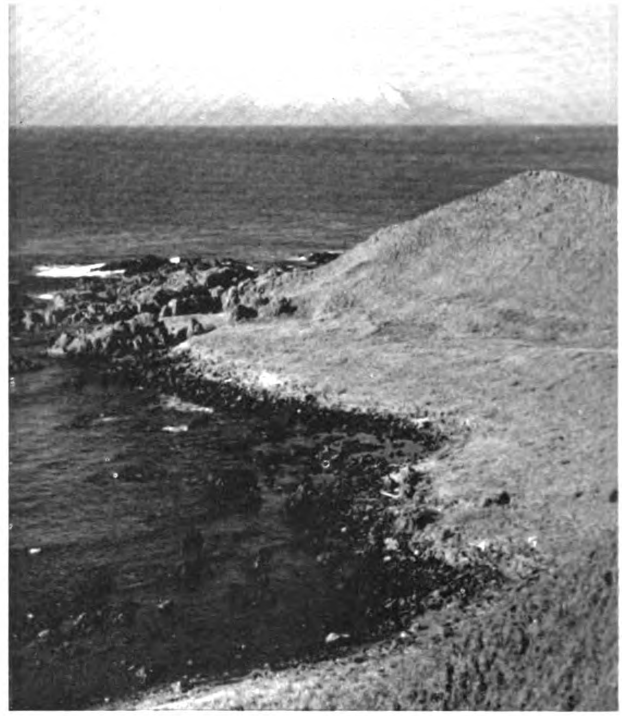








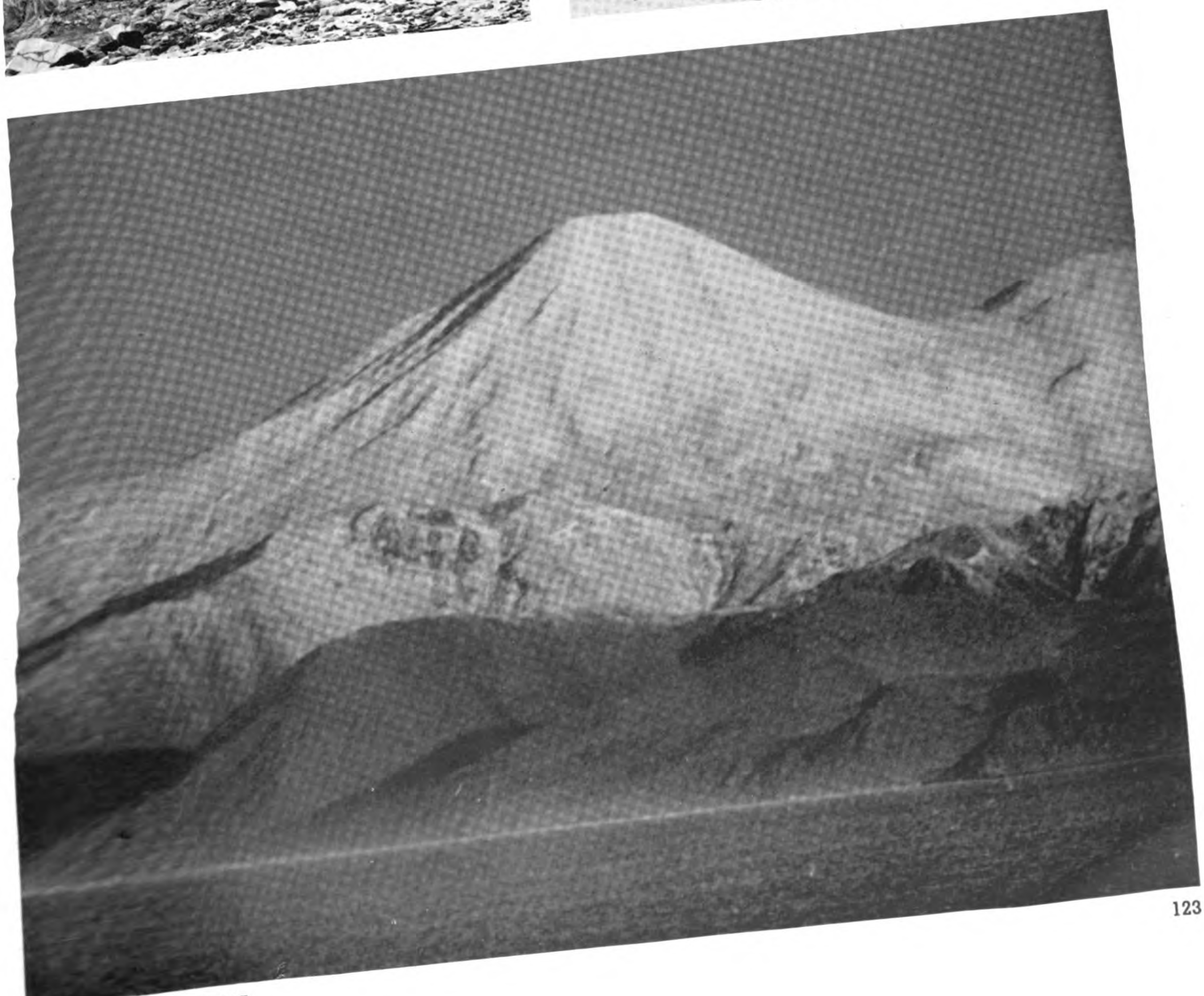


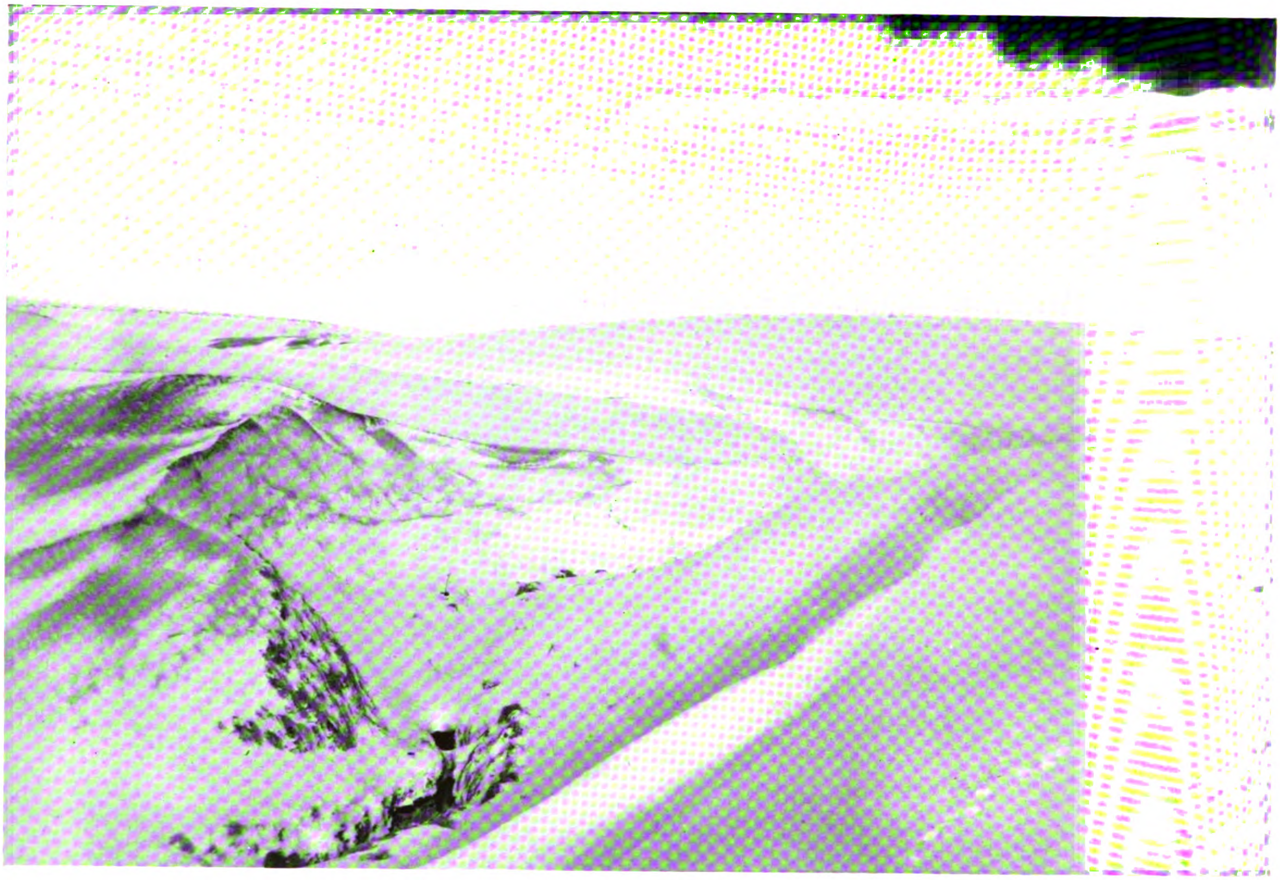








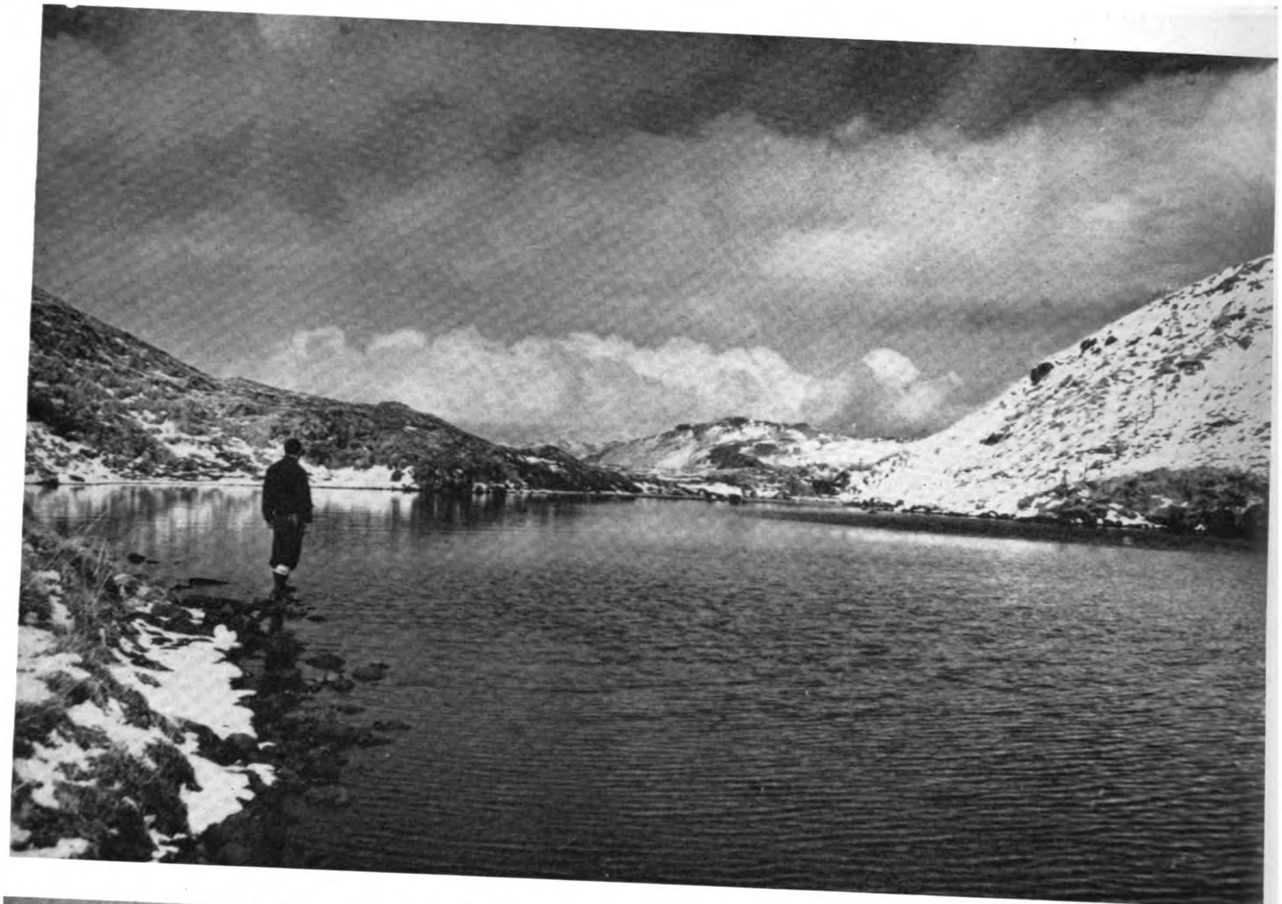
















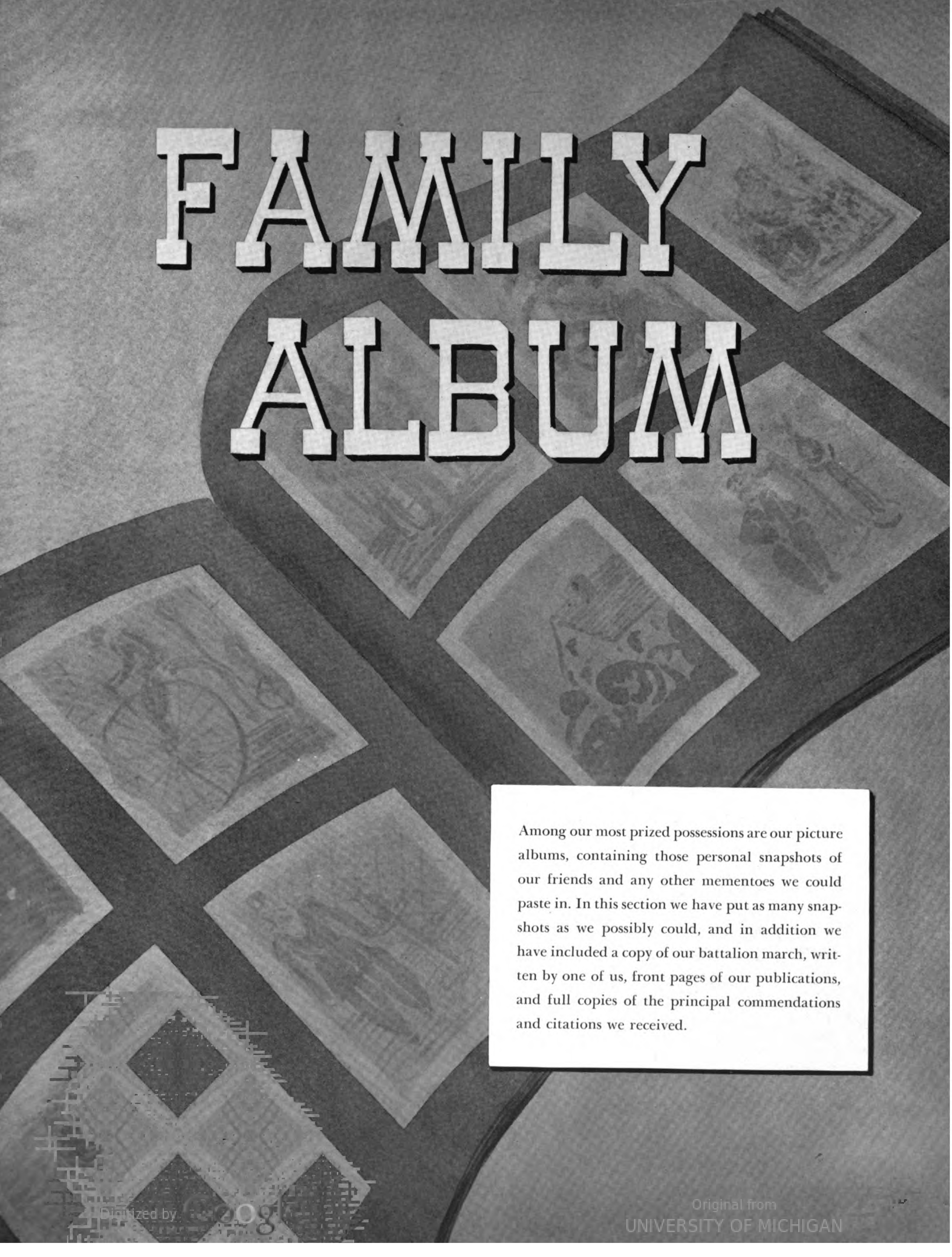



KEEP YOUR
AREA CLEAN





# FAMILY ALBUM



Among our most prized possessions are our picture albums, containing those personal snapshots of our friends and any other mementoes we could paste in. In this section we have put as many snapshots as we possibly could, and in addition we have included a copy of our battalion march, written by one of us, front pages of our publications, and full copies of the principal commendations and citations we received.










45






U.S.S. CANDO









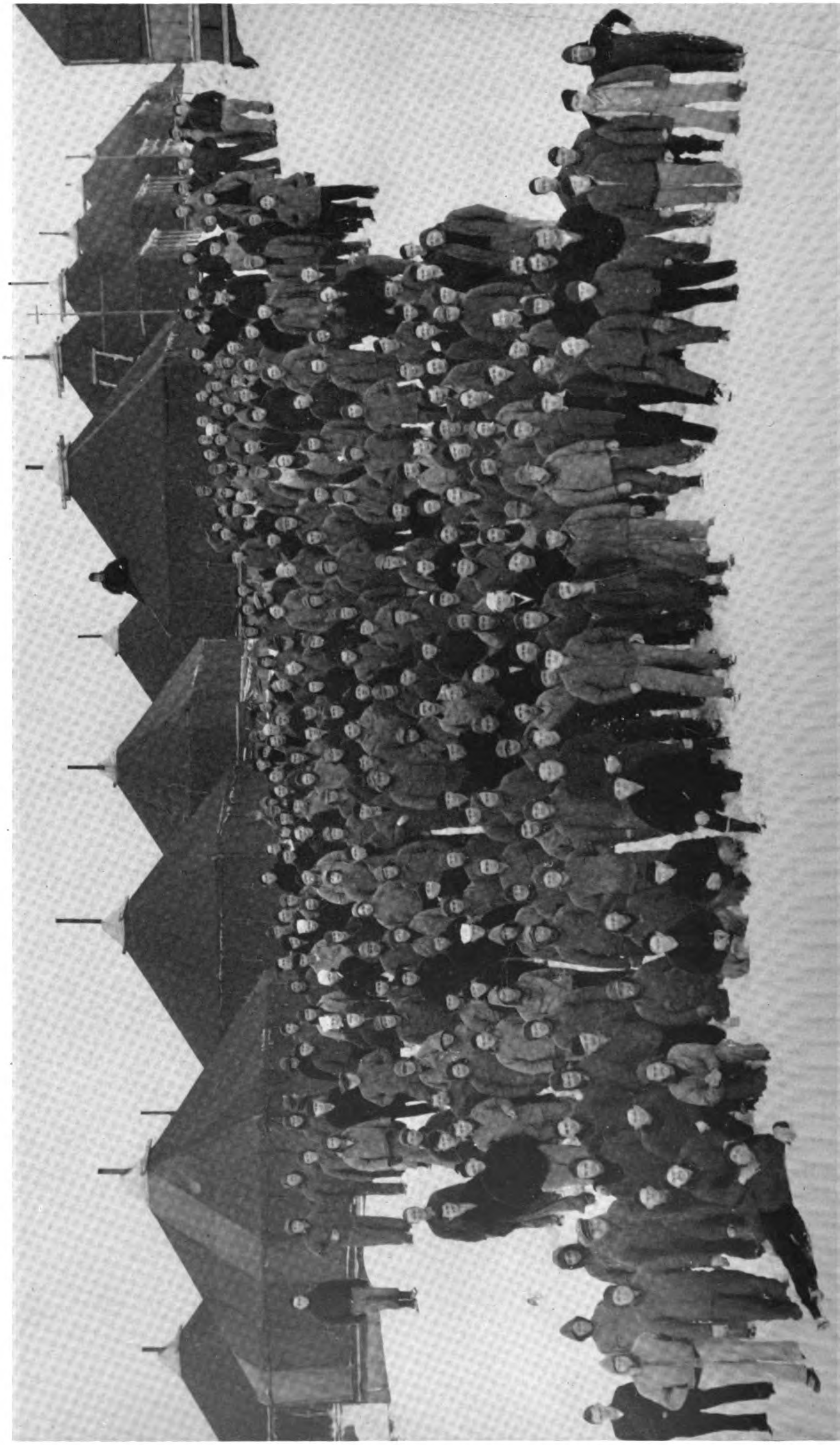




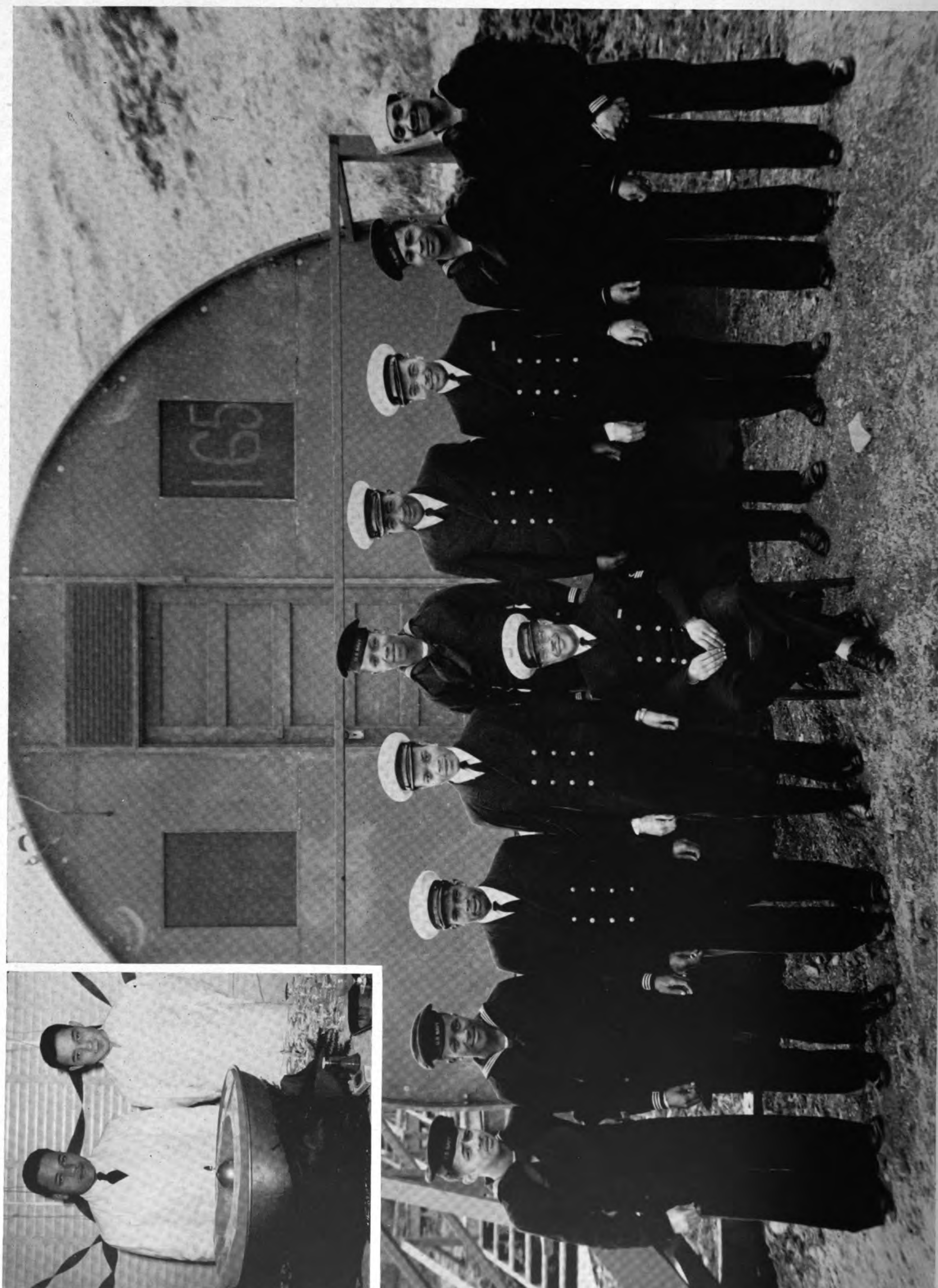










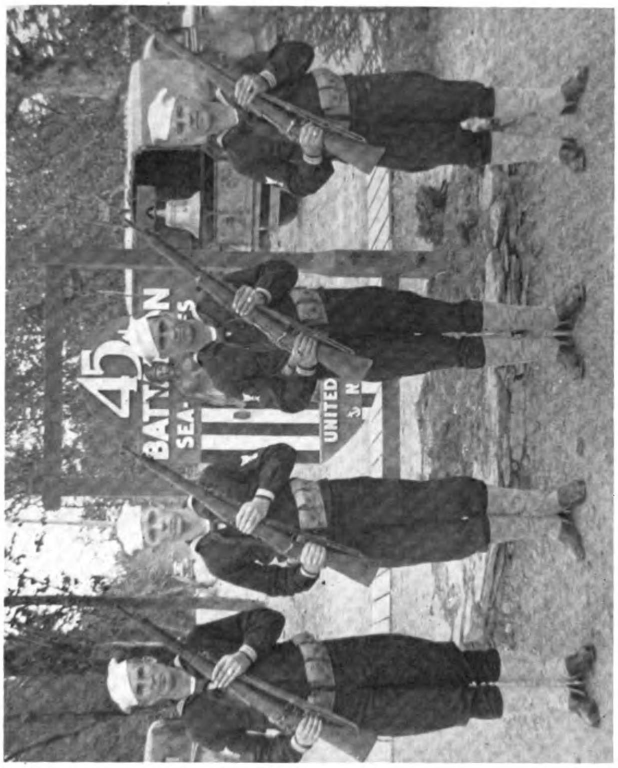

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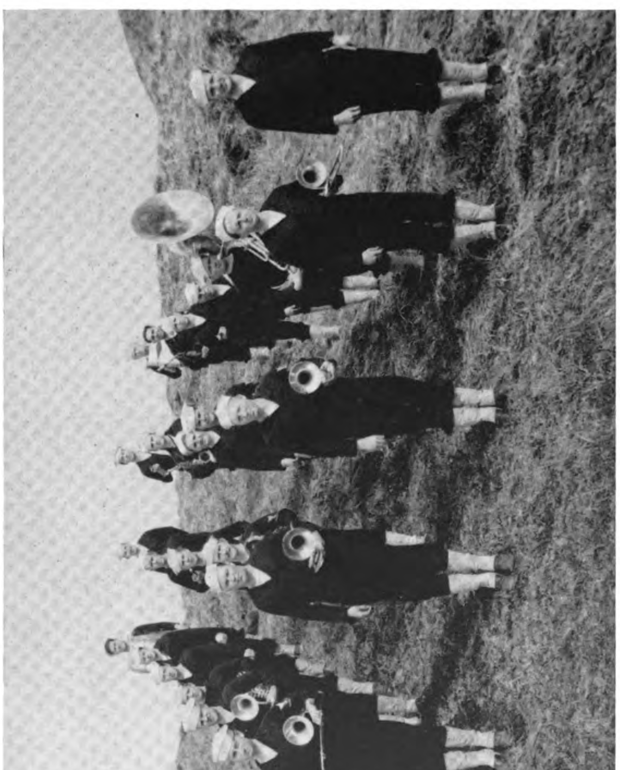


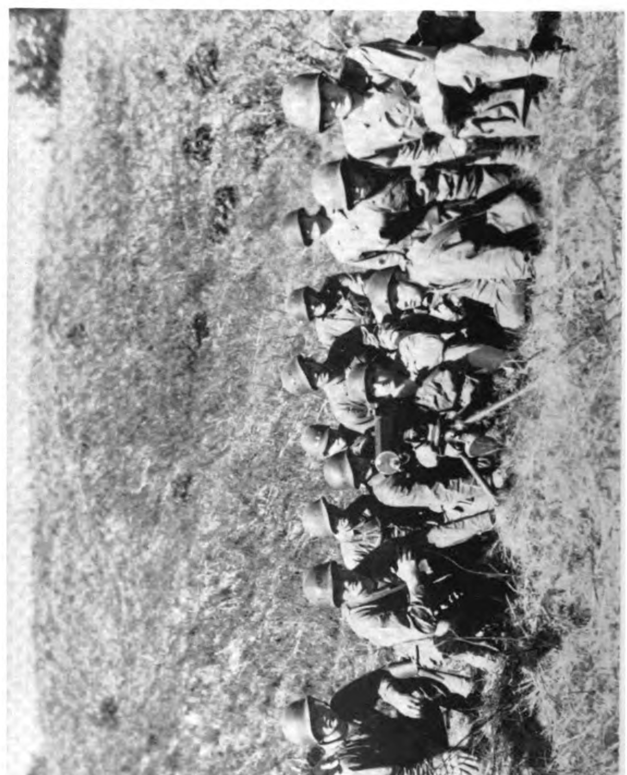





45
UNITED















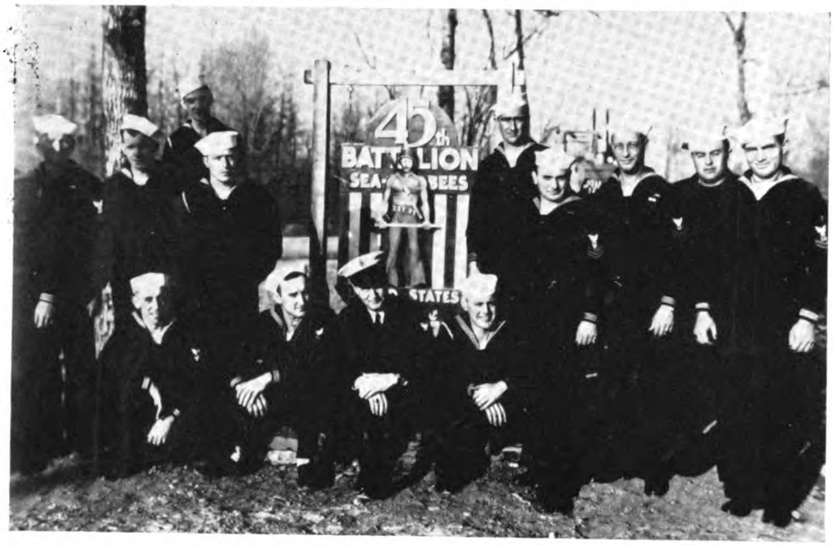








FEDERAL
RECREATION
BUILDING


45th
STATES






T PLEASE
NO SMOKING













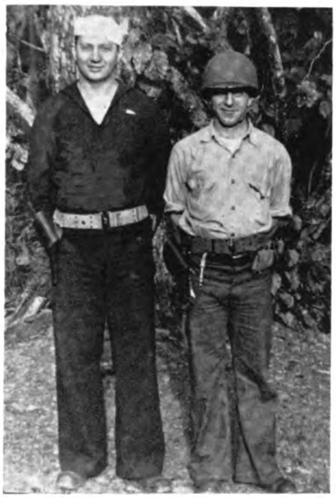

















2187




























SILVER
FOAM
BAR




45th
UNITED STATES
NAVY























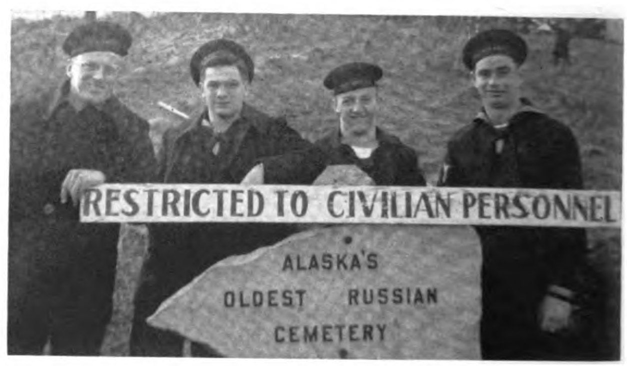



SILVER
FOAM
BAR







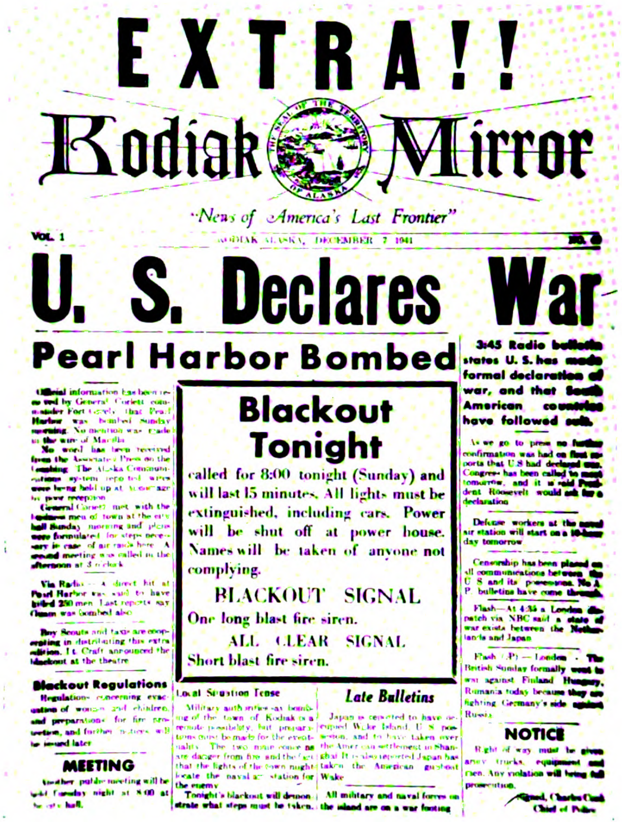

RESTRICTED TO CIVILIAN PERSONNEL
ALASKA'S
OLDEST RUSSIAN
CEMETERY





# SOUVENIRS





# EXTRA!!

## Kodiak Mirror

*"News of America's Last Frontier"*

VOL. 1 — KODIAK, ALASKA, DECEMBER 7, 1941 — NO. 6

# U. S. Declares War

## Pearl Harbor Bombed

Official information has been received by General Corlett, commander Fort Greely, that Pearl Harbor was bombed Sunday morning. No mention was made as the ware of Manila.

No word has been received from the Associated Press on the bombing. The Alaska Communications system reported wires were being held up at Anchorage by poor reception.

General Corlett met with the business men of town at the city hall Sunday morning and plans were formulated for steps necessary in case of air raids here. A second meeting was called in the afternoon at 3 o'clock.

Via Radio — A direct hit at Pearl Harbor was said to have killed 250 men. Last reports say Guam was bombed also.

Boy Scouts and taxis are cooperating in distributing this extra edition. Lt. Craft announced the blackout at the theatre.

### Blackout Regulations

Regulations concerning evacuation of women and children, and preparations for fire protection, and further notices will be issued later.

### MEETING

Another public meeting will be held Tuesday night at 8:00 at the city hall.

### Blackout Tonight

called for 8:00 tonight (Sunday) and will last 15 minutes. All lights must be extinguished, including cars. Power will be shut off at power house. Names will be taken of anyone not complying.

BLACKOUT SIGNAL

One long blast fire siren.

ALL CLEAR SIGNAL

Short blast fire siren.

### Local Situation Tense

Military authorities say bombing of the town of Kodiak is a remote possibility, but preparations must be made for the eventuality. The two main concerns are danger from fire and the fact that the lights of the town might locate the naval air station for the enemy.

Tonight's blackout will demonstrate what steps must be taken.

### Late Bulletins

Japan is reported to have occupied Wake Island, U. S. possession, and to have taken over the American settlement in Shanghai. It is also reported Japan has taken the American gunboat Wake.

All military and naval forces on the island are on a war footing.

**3:45 Radio bulletin states U. S. has made formal declaration of war, and that South American countries have followed suit.**

As we go to press no further confirmation was had on first reports that U.S had declared war. Congress has been called to meet tomorrow, and it is said President Roosevelt would ask for a declaration.

Defense workers at the naval air station will start on a 10-hour day tomorrow.

Censorship has been placed on all communications between the U. S. and its possessions. No A. P. bulletins have come through.

Flash—At 4:35 a London dispatch via NBC said a state of war exists between the Netherlands and Japan.

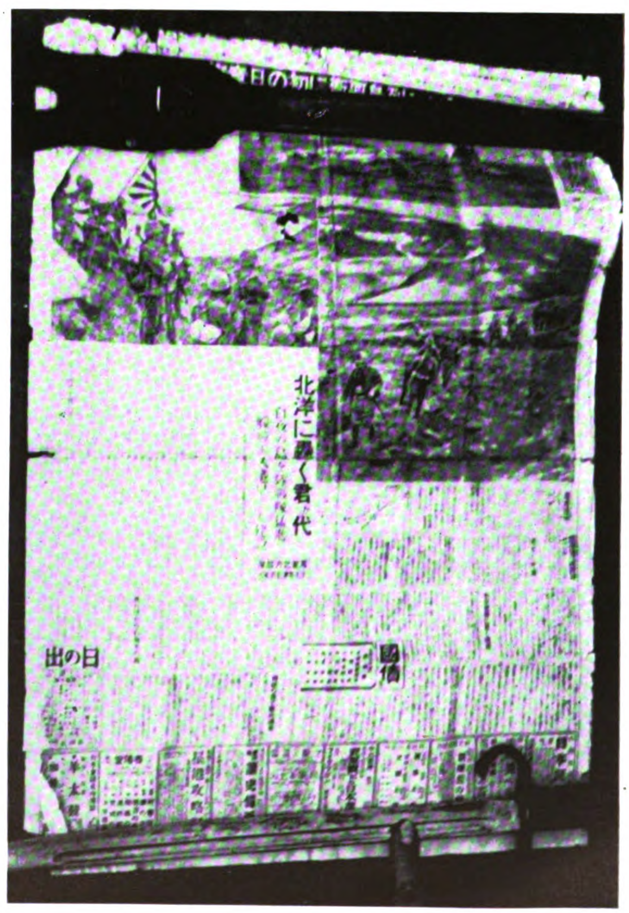
Flash (P) — London — The British Sunday formally went to war against Finland, Hungary, Rumania today because they are fighting Germany's side against Russia.

### NOTICE

Right of way must be given army trucks, equipment and men. Any violation will bring full prosecution.

Signed, Charles Clark
Chief of Police
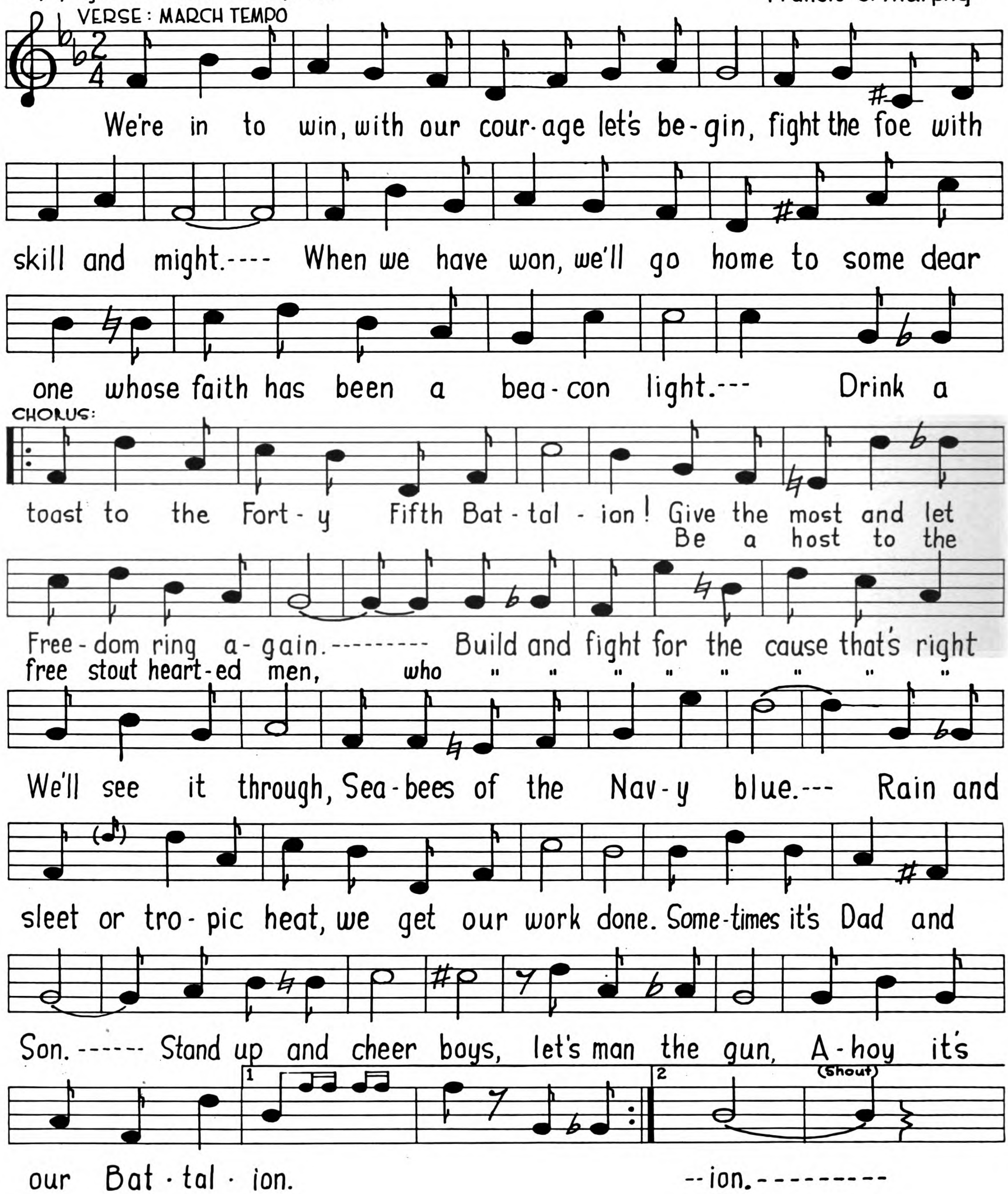




# OUR BATTALION

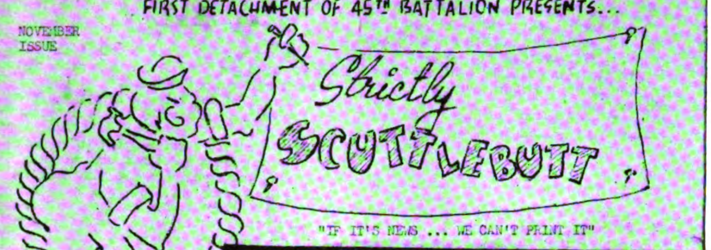
· 45 TH SEABEES MARCH ·

Words and Music by
· Francis S. Murphy ·



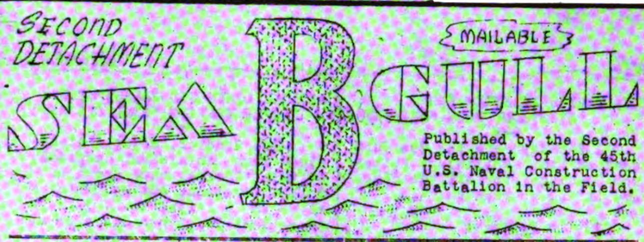


# PUBLICATIONS




Almost everyone has at
another joined in the sin
old favorite, in fact, som
sang it with such fervor
wish has been granted.
Upon arrival at this b
divided into groups, some
the station and others w
outposts, which we shall c
land Paradise", "The Rock
Heaven", and "Little Alcatr
To date no buffalo hav
ported as roaming the wild
almost every other type o
mammal has been seen. The
cases of devil fish bein
lines, whales almost upse
men going hunting and get
the wilds, venison dinners
Dale Hart, CMlc and L. K. C
who were attacked by deer
shoot them in self-defense.
"The Island Paradise
Rock" are ruled by Ensign H
and from all reports he has
a Utopia. After an occas
liberty spent at the base,
ious to get back to where
and the food is the best
man ever ate.
Lt. (jg) G. H. Caviere
of men at "Hunters Heaven"
Alcatraz". Much has been
at both these outposts, des
weather conditions, and
trade places with men a at
base.
Perhaps everyone will
satisfied with outpost lif
it does come time for ou
would rather remain here th

WHO SAID THAT?




Obviously, t
homes, will
Another day,
the Road to

But until th
only in the
happier Chri
thoughts ev
days, I co
that that
for now




## COMALSEC SENDS CONGRATS TO 45TH

Lieut. (jg) F. A. Wood, Jr., rates as one of the best liked officers of the battalion for far more than the customary reason that the man who hands out the dough on payday is bound to be popular.

In the case, the ace-high rating won by the disbursing officer is the natural result of his genial manner, the genuine friendliness in his eyes when he says hello, and his amazing ability to keep pleasant even when a persistent Seabee comes in to question the accuracy of his pay account and change his allotment (for the third time in a month) while the Disbursing Office is in the middle of one of those mathematical jobs which makes the adding machine tape fly and set the ordinary man's nerves on edge.

The youngest officer of the battalion, Lieut. (jg) Wood was born on 17 October, 1920, in Conshohocken, Penna. At an early age he revealed his remarkable mentality by learning to pronounce Conshohocken.

(Cont. on page 3)

AT THE REQUEST OF VICE ADMIRAL F. E. M. WHITING, COMMANDER OF THE ALASKAN SECTOR, NORTHWEST SEA FRONTIER, 24 ENLISTED MEN OF THE 45TH BATTALION HAVE RECEIVED COMMENDATIONS FOR THEIR WORK IN SALVAGING THE LST WHICH GROUNDED HERE RECENTLY.

Commander J. P. Roulett, Officer in Charge of the battalion, has issued a commendation to the men for their efforts in discharging the cargo of another ship during particularly adverse weather conditions.

The letter from Vice Admiral Whiting to Commander Roulett reads:

"The Commander, Alaskan Sector, is proud to learn of the splendid achievement accomplished by the officers and enlisted personnel of the 45th Naval Construction Battalion during the recent salvage operations of the USS LST-blank. This is in keeping with the highest naval tradition.

"It is requested that a copy of this commendation be made a part of the next fitness report of the OinC., 45th Naval Construction Battalion and Commander C. M. Noble, CEC V(S), USNR. It is further requested that a suitable entry be placed in the service records of the enlisted personnel concerned."

On receipt of this, Commander Roulett issued the following memorandum:

TO ALL HANDS:
Subj: Commendation
Ref: (a) Comalsec letter 11 January 1944.
(b) Lieut. H. A. Swartz letter 14 Dec. 1943 (Previously published in The Forty-Fiver.--Ed.)

1. In compliance with Reference (a) the following men are commended by the Officer in Charge for outstanding work accomplished under extremely adverse weather conditions as outlined in Reference (b):

(Cont. on page 3)

# COMMENDATIONS

Naturally, we were proud of the work we had done and the way we accomplished it. But we were made even happier to think that our progress was noted by others, too; especially those in high places. On these pages are printed some of the official commendations received by our battalion on our first tour of duty in the Northland.

## FLOATING DRY DOCK READIED TO MOVE WESTWARD

*Because it was a rush job, the time allowed to complete it was cut to a minimum. Then we lopped five days off that schedule to finish it ahead of time. For this accomplishment, Commander C. G. Smallwood (CEC), USNR, the Officer-in-Charge of the Fourth Naval Construction Regiment, on 27 August, 1943, commended us as follows:*

"On June 28, 1943, ComA1Sec ordered the Fourth Regiment to prepare the Floating Dry Dock YFD..............for movement westward, with a completion date set for not later than July 13, 1943. The project was assigned to the Fourth Regiment Waterfront Department.

"From previous study of the project it had been estimated that a minimum of fifteen days would be required, bearing in mind that it had taken thirty days to prepare YFD..............for towing from..................to..................

"Upon receipt of the orders to proceed, plans were made and the work schedule rapidly organized. Prosecution of the work was hindered by adverse conditions over which the Regiment had no control. Nevertheless, the job was completed on 7 July, ten days after the order was given, with 6,171 man-hours expended.

"This accomplishment was due to careful planning, efficient organization of the work, cooperation of all Departments concerned, and especially the continuous hard work of all hands assigned to the task.

"The 45th Battalion personnel listed on enclosure (1) are highly commended for their part in this accomplishment, another example of Seabee 'Can Do' spirit.

"It is recommended that each man be given a copy of this letter, and the commendation be entered in his service record."

*To this recommendation, Captain R. H. Meade (CEC), USN, Officer-in-Charge of the First Naval Construction Brigade, added the comment and endorsement below:*

"The Officer-in-Charge of the First Brigade heartily concurs with the commendation sent your battalion by the Officer-in-Charge, Fourth Naval Construction Regiment, for outstanding prosecution of work in connection with preparations for the moving of the Floating Drydock YFD ..............

"Entry of this commendation will be made in the service jacket of each man in your battalion connected with this project."

*These are the men of the 45th Battalion who were assigned to the dry dock project. Each has received a copy of the commendation and an entry to that effect has been made in the service record of every man concerned:*

| | |
|---|---|
| Gilroy, H. B., Ensign | |
| Baker, V. C., CCM | Office-Records |
| Mullich, O. L., CCM | General Foreman Ashore |
| Heller, G. A., CCM | Yard Foreman |
| Grace, P. R., CM1c | General Foreman Afloat |
| Anderson, C. L., CM1c | Piledriver hand |
| Bagnoli, A. J., F1c | Cat operator |
| Blechschmid, S. J., Cox | Piledriver hand |
| Burns, F. E., MM1c | P & H operator |
| Caven, V. E., MM1c | Piledriver hand |
| Connolly, C. C., SF3c | Piledriver hand |
| Deegan, D. L., CM1c | Piledriver hand |
| Duffield, E., CM3c | Foreman |
| Duncan, R. E., S2c | Laborer |
| Evans, A., S2c | Carpenter |
| Falana, O. L., CM3c | Carpenter |
| Feldman, O. H., MM2c | Tool repair and rigger |
| Gorna, G., CM2c | Carpenter |
| Haltom, L. R., S1c | Truck driver |
| Hoevelkamp, C. H., CM1c | Foreman |
| Kenny, R. J., F1c | Carpenter |
| Kerwin, J. H., MM1c | Carpenter |
| Kessen, F. J., S2c | Carpenter |
| Lee, W. L., CM1c | Carpenter |
| McDougal, C. K., MM1c | Operator-Piledriver |
| Murphy, C. W., CM2c | Carpenter |
| Neal, W. F., CM2c | Carpenter |
| Prescott, D. C., S1c | Truck driver |
| Robinson, C. L., CM2c | Carpenter |
| Rupert, E. A., S2c | Carpenter |
| Stach, J. A., SF2c | Piledriver hand |
| Summerall, L. C., CM2c | Carpenter |
| Tippins, B. A., CM1c | Foreman |
| Vickrey, R. J., CM1c | Foreman |
| Waggoner, J. R., CM3c | Piledriver hand |

# WE SALVAGE A SHIP AND SAVE ITS CARGO

*A sudden Aleutian storm grounded a heavily laden LST which had beached on our sands to unload vitally necessary supplies. We worked through storms to salvage the cargo, and then we worked to re-float the ship. (See photos on pages 90-92.) Lieut. Harry A. Swartz, skipper of the vessel, on 14 December, 1943, sent the following letter of commendation to our battalion skipper:*

"As Commanding Officer I wish particularly to commend Chief Warrant Officer Simon of the C.B.'s for his practical assistance. This officer was untiring in his efforts to aid; he was eager at any time of night or day under any conditions of weather to use his experience, his courage, his enthusiasm and his physical strength to get us off the beach.

"I wish I knew the name of every one of your men who gladly helped us in our emergency. Failing that, I am thanking them as a group for their hard, tough labors. It is perhaps unfair to select any of them above anyone else, but I do wish to commend particularly those men on the pontoon barge and the men who patched up the holes in the kelp-filled tank. Needless to say their assistance and bravery, as well as all others, helped save our ship. YOU HAVE A GREAT BUNCH OF MEN, Commander Roulett."

*Also on 14 December, 1943, Lieut. Swartz wrote the following commendation, addressed to the commander of the Alaskan Sector:*

"The crew and officers of the USS LST ............ wish officially to commend the 45th Battalion of C.B.'s for their cooperation, hard physical labor, eagerness and efficiency during the salvage operations on this ship. These 'Seabees' battled the adverse weather and sea, got wet, cold, hungry and tired without physical or mental reservations, in order to help us. We of the Navy should be proud to include such a stalwart body of MEN in our Navy.

"To be commended for their assistance and graciousness are Commander NOBLE, Officer-in-Charge, Sixth Construction Regiment C.B.'s, and Commander ROULETT, Officer-in-Charge, 45th Construction Battalion. Their cooperation was invaluable. Despite his many duties in connection with his own project Commander ROULETT devoted much of his time to the salvage of the ship, and never failed cheerfully to furnish men and equipment."

*Rear Admiral F. E. M. Whiting, then commander of the Alaskan Sector, Northwest Sea Frontier, forwarded Lieut. Swartz's commendation with the following endorsement, on 11 January, 1943:*

"The Commander, Alaskan Sector, is proud to learn of the splendid achievement accomplished by the officers and enlisted personnel of the 45th Naval Construction Battalion during the recent salvage operations of the USS LST ............ This is in keeping with the highest naval tradition.

"It is requested that a copy of this commendation be made a part of the next fitness report of the OinC, 45th Naval Construction Battalion and Commander C. M. Noble, CEC-V (S), USNR. It is further requested that a suitable entry be placed in the service records of the enlisted personnel concerned."

*To the rising chorus of praise was added the voice of Commander D. B. Wood, Ship Salvage Officer for the Alaskan Sector, who on 17 January, 1944, addressed the following to the Commander of the Alaskan Sector:*

"The Ship Salvage Officer wishes to officially thank and express his appreciation to Commander J. P. Roulett, CEC-V (S), USNR, Officer-in-Charge, and to the officers and men attached to the 45th Battalion on ............, for the valuable assistance rendered during the recent salvage operations on USS LST ......

"Material, equipment and, most important of all, skilled personnel were at all times available during the salvage operations and materially assisted to float the stranded vessel.

"Particular mention is made of the valuable assistance rendered and outstanding performance of duty by Chief Warrant Carpenter Floyd H. Simon, CEC-V (S), USNR. This officer was on the job day and night, and by his skillful handling of a self-propelled pontoon barge, heavy anchors and gear were loaded, and beach gear laid, in spots inaccessible to the salvage vessel.

"In order to dewater the shaft alleys and flooded compartments aft it was necessary to construct timber patches for the holes in the bottoms of such compartments. This work was done in compartments half filled with water and foul with vegetable gas, by the below listed men who are commended for their skill, efficiency and devotion to duty:

BAKER, Vane Clair, CCM, USNR
ANDERSON, Carl Louis, CM1c, USNR
VICKREY, Robert John, CM1c, USNR
KANE, Harold Edward, EM2c, USNR."

*Again Rear Admiral F. E. M. Whiting, USN, forwarded a commendation "with pleasure and congratulations," adding the following comment, on 25 January, 1944:*

"Devotion to duty, exemplified by the personnel named in the Salvage Officer's letter, regularly prevails over adverse conditions and difficult assignments. Examples, such as this, are genuinely gratifying to the Commander, Alaskan Sector."

*Commander Charles M. Noble, Officer-in-Charge of the Sixth U. S. Naval Construction Regiment, added this comment when he forwarded the Salvage Officer's commendation on 1 February, 1944:*

"This evidence of the resourcefulness, courage and will-to-do of the 45th Battalion is most gratifying.

"It is directed that a copy of the basic letter and endorsements be attached to the next fitness reports of the officers

concerned and that suitable entries be made in the service records of the enlisted men mentioned."

## WE FINISH ADVANCED BASE AHEAD OF TIME LIMIT

*On our main project of base-building on a barren wasteland of an island we twice beat the deadline by a matter of days. For this and the successful completion of the base, Commander Charles M. Noble, Officer-in-Charge of the Sixth Naval Construction Regiment, forwarded this commendation on 27 January, 1944:*

"The Officer-in-Charge wishes to commend the 45th Battalion, working under unusually difficult conditions, for the early completion of an important advanced base project.

"You and approximately one-half of your battalion landed on the beach of a completely barren and uninhabited island where no sheltered harbor was available, set up camp and unloaded approximately 4,300 tons of supplies, construction materials and heavy equipment weighing up to fifty tons, over the side of a Liberty ship anchored three miles off shore, into LCT's and thence through the surf onto the open beach. This operation was carried out expeditiously and without undue mishap under extremely hazardous conditions and it involved your taking a heavy responsibility.

"Immediately after landing, work on the semi-permanent tent camp, the permanent quonset housing, and the main project was started, it being necessary to provide machine shops, repair and servicing facilities, access roads, water supply, and in fact all facilities from a standing start and with no native construction materials of any sort available except small quantities of gravel, which could only be utilized for minor concrete work.

"In spite of difficulties and lack of all natural materials, work on the project was prosecuted so vigorously that the initial portion was completed five days ahead of schedule and the remainder was completed 22 January, nine days ahead of schedule.

"Successful and early completion of this important facility in a forward area represents a definite and worthwhile contribution to the war effort and it is due entirely to the leadership of the Officer-in-Charge, the battalion officers, and the spirit, high morale, ingenuity and will-to-do displayed by ALL HANDS in spite of all difficulties of weather and terrain, often under extremely hazardous conditions.

"The Officer-in-Charge wishes to congratulate ALL HANDS on this splendid record and to commend the 45th Battalion for a job 'well done.' "

## RIG BREECHES BUOY TO SAVE PERILED SHIP'S CREW

*Our actions in safely removing 49 men from a Navy net tender which had been driven on the rocks during a winter storm earned for us another commendation. It came, during March of 1944, from Commander Charles M. Noble, Officer-in-Charge of the Sixth Naval Construction Regiment. (Photos of this rescue are on pages 88 and 89.)*

"The Officer-in-Charge views with pride and satisfaction the magnificent accomplishment of the 45th Battalion in rescuing 49 officers and men from a net tender which had been driven on the rocks.

"This operation was carried out under extremely hazardous conditions, and it was only made possible by outstanding leadership, courage and seamanship. The accomplishment of carrying one thousand feet of steel cable from shore through heavy seas, securing it to the stricken vessel and evacuating the crew by breeches buoy was an outstanding operation. It involved courage of a high order, superb seamanship, long hours under adverse weather conditions, and severe exposure, inasmuch as the men were often immersed in icy water for long periods of time. Your personal leadership and the unhesitating courage and sacrifice displayed by all hands is an inspiration and an example to all naval personnel.

"It is with pleasure that this commendation is transmitted, and it is directed that it be published to the battalion and that a copy be attached to the service record of all personnel directly involved. Your actions and that of the personnel concerned are in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

## GRACE, CLIFTON AND DONOHUE WIN MEDALS

*For saving a life at the risk of their own lives, three members of our battalion won citations and the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. (Photos on page 100.) Their act of bravery occurred when we were taking men ashore from a grounded net tender, and the breeches buoy broke. Lieut. D. B. Howard, commanding officer of the grounded vessel, wrote the following on 28 February, 1944, to the Commander of the Alaskan Sector:*

"Attention is invited to the highly commendable work of the subject organization in rescuing the crew of this ship following

its stranding in .......... Bay in the early morning of 26 February, 1944.

"Despite a lack of adequate equipment, extremely hazardous weather conditions, and the unfavorable location of the ship in the midst of breakers some 1,100 feet from shore, the resourcefulness and perseverance of the Seabees and the ship's company succeeded in rigging a breeches buoy to shore by which 23 men had been landed by nightfall of 26 February. When one member of the ship's company was in danger of being lost in the surf following a failure of the high line, he was rescued by the quick, cool thinking and daring, skillful seamanship of three members of the 45th Naval Construction Battalion who were later ascertained to be:

GRACE, Paul R., 634 65 19, CCM, V-6, USNR
CLIFTON, James A., 659 18 00, CBM, V-6, USNR
DONOHUE, James J., 612 68 89, SF1c, V-6, USNR

"On the morning of February 27, the original breeches buoy failed after one man had been safely landed ashore. By the middle of the afternoon, a new breeches buoy had been rigged, again despite lack of equipment and under most unfavorable weather conditions. The Seabees then succeeded in launching a Higgins boat through the surf at the small landing beach, and, by coming alongside the ship during the intervals between the largest breakers, were able to remove the remaining 25 members of the ship's crew and land them safely ashore.

"The exemplary actions of the 45th Naval Construction Battalion, .......... Detachment, during these operations, were a credit to an organization which in its short existence has already built an enviable record of achievement."

*To the Commandant, Seventeenth Naval District, went this letter about each of the men from Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander of the North Pacific Force, on 21 April, 1944:*

"The Commander North Pacific Force, having been informed of the extraordinary heroism of the above named enlisted man, takes pleasure in awarding him the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL.

"Since it is impracticable to order the recipient to Washington for the presentation of the award by the Secretary of the Navy, Commander North Pacific Force desires that the Senior Officer Present deliver the award with appropriate ceremony in the name of the President of the United States.

"By copy of this letter the Secretary of the Navy is requested to forward the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL and permanent citation to the recipient thereof.

"By copy of this letter the Chief of Naval Personnel is requested to make the citation a part of the service record of the man concerned. By copy of this letter the Commanding Officer is requested to file a copy of the citation with the service record of the enlisted man concerned."

*This letter from Rear Admiral F. E. M. Whiting, now Commandant of the Seventeenth Naval District, to the Officer-in-Charge of the First Naval Construction Brigade accompanied the medals and citations:*

"The Commandant, Seventeenth Naval District, takes great pleasure in forwarding the enclosed temporary citations and ribbons as authorized in references (a), (b), and (c). It is directed that the presentation of the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS RIBBONS to GRACE, Paul R., DONOHUE, James J., and CLIFTON, James A., be made at an early date by the Officer-in-Charge, First Naval Construction Brigade, with appropriate ceremony.

"In addition to the outstanding and heroic efforts of the above-named personnel, the Commandant takes this opportunity to commend highly the entire .......... Detachment of the 45th Naval Construction Battalion. Their immediate response in this emergency and the resourcefulness and determination of the officers and men made possible the rescue of the personnel of the USS .................... The action of this Detachment was exemplary, particularly in the face of adverse weather conditions.

"Appreciation of the efforts of the .......... Detachment is expressed also in the letter, enclosed herewith, from the Commanding Officer of the .......... It is directed that in addition to the presentation of these awards to the above-named personnel, this correspondence shall be published to the entire Battalion."

*And here is a copy of the citation received by "our heroes" for their unselfish and daring act. This was signed by Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander, North Pacific Force, United States Pacific Fleet:*

"The Commander, North Pacific Force, United States Pacific Fleet, takes pleasure in presenting the NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL to

Paul R. GRACE, CCM (AA) (CB), 634 65 19, V-6, USNR
James A. CLIFTON, CBM (AA) (CB), 659 18 00, V-6, USNR
James J. DONOHUE, SF1c, (CB), 612 68 89, V-6, USNR

for service as set forth in the following citation:

"'For extraordinary heroism in assisting in the rescue of the crew of the USS ..............., which went aground on ............... Island, Alaska, on 26 February, 1944. During the rescue operations, a highline carried away, throwing the breeches buoy with which the crew were being brought ashore into the water and injuring THORNTON, G. E., SoM3c, USNR, who was in the buoy. GRACE, CLIFTON and DONOHUE, members of the beach party and dressed in heavy rubber working clothes and boots, and without life jackets, unhesitatingly and without orders manned and launched a small home-made boat. In spite of the heavy surf which was breaking over rocks, and with complete disregard for their own safety, they through courage, skillful seamanship, and resourcefulness, hauled the injured man into the boat and landed him ashore, thereby saving his life. Their conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the Naval Service.' "

# BATTALION MUSTER

"Hi, Mac! Where yuh from?" That was the first question asked of us in "boot" camp—and we've been hearing it ever since. In this section we answer that question once and for all for all of us. We show here our names, ranks and rates, and "where we're from."

# BATTALION MUSTER

## OFFICERS

| NAME | RANK | HOME ADDRESS |
|---|---|---|
| ROULETT, J. P. | Comdr. | 2915 146th St., Flushing, New York |
| STUCK, R. G. | Comdr. | 16 Lake Ave., Wolcott, New York |
| JONES, J. W. | Lt. Comdr. | RFD No. 2, Monroe, New York |
| HASENKAMP, J. F. | Lieut. | R. No. 6, Igou Rd., Chattanooga, Tennessee |
| SHUMAKER, E. F. | Lieut. | 120 Ivy St., Edgewood, Pennsylvania |
| CARPENTER, J. T. | Lieut. | 3533 83rd St., Jackson Heights, New York |
| GILLESPIE, J. E. | Lieut. | 165 Woodland Dr., Huntington, West Virginia |
| ALLEN, J. P. | Lieut. | New Martinsville, West Virginia |
| HUTTON, E. H. | Lieut. | 207 Summit St., Norristown, Pennsylvania |
| METTLE, M. J. | Lieut. | 58 King Ave., Columbus, Ohio |
| RICKS, W. B. | Lieut. | 327 S. 5th St., Effingham, Illinois |
| MANNING, R. B. | Lieut. | 1330 Lincoln St., Portsmouth, Ohio |
| GOLDEN, J. F. | Lieut. | 1113 Teller Ave., New York, New York |
| CAVIEZEL, G. H. | Lieut. | 739 W. Henry St., Pontiac, Illinois |
| MEEKER, C. S. | Lieut. | Jacksonville, Illinois |
| MARTIN, J. E. | Lieut. | 712 S. Catalina St., Los Angeles, California |
| MITCHELL, W. H. | Lt. (jg) | 19 Hawthorne St., Norwich, Connecticut |
| RISING, R. R. | Lt. (jg) | 424 Benton Blvd., Kansas City, Missouri |
| GILROY, H. B. | Lt. (jg) | Dayton, North Dakota |
| SIMON, F. H. | Lt. (jg) | Neskowin, Oregon |
| OLSON, C. N. | Ensign | 4104 Howard St., Youngstown, Ohio |
| KEELER, R. T. | Ensign | 603 Dixie Terminal Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio |
| AHEARN, F. X. | Ensign | 136 Huntington Ave., Boston, Massachusetts |
| COOK, J. C. | Ch. Carp. | 202 Matoaka Rd., Richmond, Virginia |
| BOX, C. R. | Carp. | 209 W. 38th St., Kansas City, Missouri |
| TAHENY, J. P. | Carp. | 5633 N. Kenmore Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
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| TAULBEE, B. | Lt. (jg) | P. O. Box 149, Bay City, Texas |
| THOMPSON, W. L. | Lt. (jg) | 703 N. Pearl St., Ellensburg, Washington |
| REEVES, J. P. | Ch. Phar. | RFD No. 1, Falmouth, Virginia |
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# ENLISTED MEN

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CARTER, Orus Alvin, MM2c
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CARTWRIGHT, Floyd Earl, CM3c
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# Autographs

"Sign here!" Since our first day in the recruiting office, those words have been ringing in our ears. So our book would not be complete without a few pages reserved for signatures. When we thumb through this section in later years, we will have many memories about those who oblige when we ask them to "sign here."

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# THE LAST WORD

Well, that's it.

That's our story, our scenery, our snapshots and the rest. So far as a pictorial record of our first tour of duty is concerned, this is the end.

But it is not the end of our work as Seabees. We still have more jobs to do to accomplish our part in winning the final victory.

As each day of life is but a preparation for the morrow, so our first tour of duty was really but preparation for our next.

In the Northland we changed from Chechakhos to Sourdoughs. As part of the United States Navy, we have changed from raw recruits to war-seasoned veterans.

We are ready for whatever lies ahead.

May, 1944

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